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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**No. 275**      Session of  
2002

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INTRODUCED BY MELLOW AND JUBELIRER, SEPTEMBER 24, 2002

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, SEPTEMBER 24, 2002

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of September 23 through 29, 2002, as  
2 "Religious Freedom Week" in Pennsylvania, and urging the  
3 Governor to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

4 WHEREAS, The principle of religious liberty was an essential  
5 part of the founding of the nation and must be safeguarded with  
6 eternal vigilance by all men and women of good will; and

7 WHEREAS, Religious liberty has been endangered throughout  
8 history by bigotry and indifference; and

9 WHEREAS, The First Amendment of the Constitution of the  
10 United States guarantees the inalienable rights of individuals  
11 to worship freely or to not be religious, as they choose,  
12 without interference from governmental or other agencies; and

13 WHEREAS, The Constitution of the United States ensures  
14 religious freedom to all people of the United States; and

15 WHEREAS, In a letter to the Touro Synagogue written in 1790,  
16 President George Washington declared that the nation would give  
17 "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance"; and

18 WHEREAS, The Touro Synagogue letter advocating the doctrine

1 of mutual respect and understanding was issued more than one  
2 year before the adoption of the Bill of Rights; and

3 WHEREAS, The Touro Synagogue letter and the Touro Synagogue  
4 have become national symbols of the commitment of the United  
5 States to religious freedom; and

6 WHEREAS, Throughout the history of the nation, religion has  
7 contributed to the welfare of the faithful and of society  
8 generally and has been a force for maintaining high standards  
9 for morality, ethics and justice; and

10 WHEREAS, William Penn, despite his social position and  
11 excellent education, converted to a persecuted religious group,  
12 the Society of Friends, or Quakers, and used his inherited  
13 wealth and rank to benefit and protect his fellow believers; and

14 WHEREAS, the first General Assembly of the Province of  
15 Pennsylvania on December 7, 1682, adopted the Great Law, a  
16 humanitarian code which became the fundamental basis of  
17 Pennsylvania law and which guaranteed liberty of conscience; and

18 WHEREAS, Religion is most free when it is observed  
19 voluntarily at private initiative, free from Government  
20 interference and unconstrained by majority preference; and

21 WHEREAS, Religious liberty can be protected only through the  
22 unified efforts of all persons of good will; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the week of September 23  
24 through 29, 2002, as "Religious Freedom Week" in Pennsylvania;  
25 and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Senate urge the Governor to issue a  
27 proclamation calling on the people of Pennsylvania, including  
28 members of all faiths or none, to join together in support of  
29 religious tolerance and religious liberty for all and to observe  
30 the week with appropriate activities.