THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 383

Session of 2007

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, THOMAS, SIPTROTH, BLACKWELL, JAMES, DALEY, PARKER, GALLOWAY, YOUNGBLOOD, JOSEPHS, COHEN, BELFANTI, HORNAMAN, MYERS, PHILLIPS, PALLONE, K. SMITH, BOBACK AND CLYMER, SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

A RESOLUTION

- Recognizing that more than 160 million people in India are
- 2 considered untouchable and dehumanized by the caste system.
- WHEREAS, The caste system, which dates back more than 2,000
- 4 years, divides the population into higher castes which include
- 5 priests and warriors and lower caste such as laborers; and
- 6 WHEREAS, The untouchables' most basic needs are not
- 7 fulfilled, and untouchables face great difficulties in accessing
- 8 employment, education, food and health care; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Most untouchables are among the poorest people in
- 10 the world, living on less than \$1 per day; and
- 11 WHEREAS, India's untouchables are relegated to undesirable
- 12 jobs and live in constant fear of being publicly humiliated,
- 13 paraded naked, beaten and raped with impunity by upper caste
- 14 Hindus seeking to keep them in their place; and
- 15 WHEREAS, The police, village councils and government
- 16 officials often support the caste system, which is based on

- 1 Hindu religious teachings; and
- WHEREAS, Many crimes go unreported due to fear of reprisal,
- 3 police intimidation, inability to pay bribes demanded by police
- 4 or simply the knowledge that the police will do nothing; and
- 5 WHEREAS, At the bottom of the untouchable caste are Dalits;
- 6 and
- 7 WHEREAS, Nearly 90% of all poor Indians and 95% of all
- 8 illiterate Indians are Dalits; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Every hour two Dalits are assaulted and every day
- 10 three women are raped, two Dalits are murdered and two Dalit
- 11 homes are torched; and
- 12 WHEREAS, The caste system, a powerful tool for social
- 13 segregation, runs deep in the minds of Indians and has
- 14 implications in everyday life; therefore be it
- 15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, acknowledging
- 16 that caste-based discrimination is institutionalized throughout
- 17 India and that its corrosive influence on the Indian people must
- 18 be effectively addressed, recognize the caste system's
- 19 debilitating influence on the daily lives of millions in India
- 20 and encourage the Commonwealth to work with India to find new
- 21 approaches to this age-old problem.