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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 379 Session of  
2008

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INTRODUCED BY ORIE, C. WILLIAMS, M. WHITE, BOSCOLA, WASHINGTON,  
EARLL, TARTAGLIONE, BAKER, KITCHEN, PILEGGI, MELLOW, STOUT,  
TOMLINSON, A. WILLIAMS, FERLO, COSTA, FONTANA, WONDERLING,  
LAVALLE, STACK, ARMSTRONG, RAFFERTY, BROWNE, KASUNIC,  
MCILHINNEY, DINNIMAN, O'PAKE, ERICKSON, WAUGH, BRUBAKER,  
PUNT, LOGAN AND PIPPY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

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## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the 88th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th  
2 amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

3 WHEREAS, The struggle for women's suffrage in Pennsylvania  
4 has a long history: while William Penn was a Quaker and the  
5 Society of Friends (Quakers) considered men and women equal in  
6 God's sight and permitted women to speak during their religious  
7 services, women were not granted political rights throughout the  
8 Colonial Period (1681-1776)--only white adult males who owned  
9 property could vote; and

10 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's Revolutionary political leaders  
11 broadened male voting by abolishing the property qualifications  
12 but did not extend the vote to women, in spite of Abigail Adams'  
13 of Massachusetts admonition to her husband John to "consider the  
14 ladies" as he and others formed the new political structure; and

15 WHEREAS, A precursor to the women's suffrage movement was  
16 abolitionism: by 1804 all states above the Mason-Dixon Line

1 provided for the "gradual abolition" of slavery, and, in fact,  
2 Pennsylvania in 1780 was the first to do so by legislative  
3 action; and

4 WHEREAS, Women's rights activism rose as Northerners  
5 continued their opposition to slavery in the South, with mixed  
6 results: the women who founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-  
7 Slavery Society in 1838 were denied admission to an  
8 international antislavery convention in London in 1840 because  
9 of their gender; and

10 WHEREAS, At Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, women declared  
11 that their rights required the same emphasis as the rights of  
12 slaves, and Pennsylvania's Lucretia Mott demanded full political  
13 rights, proclaiming that "all men and women are created equal";  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, In 1852 a women's rights convention was held in West  
16 Chester, Pennsylvania; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1876 Susan B. Anthony, whose name was synonymous  
18 with women's suffrage, read a suffragette's declaration of  
19 independence at the celebration of the nation's centennial in  
20 Philadelphia, where 150,000 people gathered at Independence  
21 Square for patriotic ceremonies; and

22 WHEREAS, Most of the men in attendance failed to note the  
23 connection between the Declaration of Independence Thomas  
24 Jefferson drafted in 1776 and the declaration Susan B. Anthony  
25 read; and

26 WHEREAS, By 1915, advocates of women's suffrage had won the  
27 Pennsylvania General Assembly's approval for a referendum on an  
28 amendment to the Constitution of Pennsylvania, to be decided by  
29 male voters; and

30 WHEREAS, The referendum failed, despite intense lobbying; and

1       WHEREAS, The door having been opened, State and national  
2 organizations maintained the pressure by emphasizing women's  
3 contributions in medicine, industry, business and other  
4 professions and in "shouldering the obligations of those who  
5 would never return"; and

6       WHEREAS, On June 4, 1919, the Congress of the United States  
7 approved the women's suffrage constitutional amendment and sent  
8 it to state legislatures for ratification; and

9       WHEREAS, Pennsylvania quickly approved the amendment on June  
10 27, 1919, becoming the eighth state to ratify; and

11       WHEREAS, In August 1920, with three-fourths of the states  
12 having agreed, the 19th amendment was officially certified as  
13 part of the Constitution of the United States; and

14       WHEREAS, The amendment was brief and succinct--stating that  
15 the "rights of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged  
16 by the United States or by any State on account of sex"--but had  
17 far-reaching implications; therefore be it

18       RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the 88th anniversary of  
19 the ratification of the 19th amendment to the Constitution of  
20 the United States, granting women the right to vote.