

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 417 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY GABIG, JULY 20, 2009

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, JULY
20, 2009

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating September 13, 2009, as "Commodore John Barry Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry was born at Ballysampson in
4 Tachumshin Parish, County Wexford, Ireland, in 1745 and
5 immigrated to Philadelphia at 15 years of age, finding
6 employment with a shipping firm where he prospered and became
7 master of several merchant vessels; and

8 WHEREAS, Commodore Barry's first command came in 1766 aboard
9 the schooner "Barbadoes" sailing out of Philadelphia, which he
10 adopted as his home port; and

11 WHEREAS, At the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War,
12 Commodore Barry, like many of his fellow Irish Americans who
13 constituted nearly 40% of the continental forces, joined the
14 battle for American independence; and

15 WHEREAS, Upon the outbreak of war, the Continental Congress
16 commissioned Commodore Barry as Captain of the ship "Lexington,"
17 which on April 7, 1776, captured the British sloop "Edward," the
18 first war prize taken by the Americans; and

1 WHEREAS, On December 24, 1776, with his fleet unable to reach
2 open water, Commodore Barry left his ships behind to recruit a
3 company of volunteers with whom he rushed to the aid of General
4 George Washington on the banks of the Delaware River and
5 participated in the American victories at Princeton and Trenton;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, During the course of the American Revolutionary War,
8 Commodore Barry boldly and skillfully engaged and captured many
9 British vessels and was wounded in service to his country; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1781, the Catholic Citizens of France sent to the
11 Americans the sum of \$6 million, entrusting the safe transport
12 of those vital funds as well as clothing and munitions to
13 Commodore Barry aboard his ship "Resolute," which he
14 successfully delivered, enabling General Washington to sustain
15 his army through the critical showdown at Yorktown; and

16 WHEREAS, On March 10, 1783, Commodore Barry, commanding the
17 "Alliance," won the last sea battle of the Revolution when,
18 while escorting a shipment of vital funds, he engaged and
19 avoided capture by the British ship "Sybille"; and

20 WHEREAS, Commodore Barry was instrumental in the effort to
21 persuade the Pennsylvania General Assembly to ratify the
22 Constitution of the United States, providing observers with a
23 compelling example of persuasive lobbying; and

24 WHEREAS, After the American Revolutionary War and the
25 dissolution of the Continental Navy, Commodore Barry reentered
26 the maritime trade, helping to open commerce with China and the
27 Orient; and

28 WHEREAS, Commodore Barry was socially active as a member of
29 the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, the Hibernian Fire Company,
30 the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Order of the Cincinnati,

1 the military brotherhood of officers of the Continental Army,
2 Navy and Marines; and

3 WHEREAS, Under President Washington's guidance, the Navy was
4 revived as a permanent entity, and on February 22, 1797,
5 President Washington conferred Commission Number One in the Navy
6 upon John Barry, designating him Commanding Officer of the
7 United States Navy with the rank of Commodore, the first in the
8 United States Navy; and

9 WHEREAS, Commodore Barry is generally recognized as the
10 Father of the United States Navy, a title bestowed upon him by
11 his contemporaries; and

12 WHEREAS, Commodore Barry's last day of active duty came on
13 March 6, 1801, and he remained head of the Navy until his death
14 on September 13, 1803; and

15 WHEREAS, Commodore Barry was given a full military burial in
16 Philadelphia's Old St. Mary's Churchyard; and

17 WHEREAS, The death of Commodore Barry was mourned by the
18 entire nation, and monuments honoring him have subsequently been
19 raised in Philadelphia, Washington, DC, New York, Boston and
20 Wexford, Ireland; therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
22 significance of the legacy of Commodore John Barry and his
23 monumental role in the American Revolutionary War that allowed
24 this nation to be founded on the principles of freedom and
25 opportunity for all people; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate
27 September 13, 2009, as "Commodore John Barry Day" in
28 Pennsylvania.