

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 81

Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY MANN, BISHOP, BOBACK, BOYD, B. BOYLE, K. BOYLE, BRADFORD, BRENNAN, BRIGGS, BROOKS, V. BROWN, BROWNLEE, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, CONKLIN, D. COSTA, DALEY, DAVIS, DAY, DELOZIER, DeLUCA, DENLINGER, DiGIROLAMO, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, FLECK, GEIST, GEORGE, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRELL, HAHN, HARHAI, HARHART, HARPER, HENNESSEY, HICKERNELL, HORNAMAN, JOSEPHS, KAVULICH, KILLION, KIRKLAND, KORTZ, KOTIK, KULA, LONGIETTI, MAHONEY, MAJOR, MATZIE, MICOZZIE, MILLARD, MIRABITO, MOUL, MUNDY, MURT, MUSTIO, MYERS, OBERLANDER, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL, PASHINSKI, PAYNE, PAYTON, PETRI, PICKETT, PYLE, QUIGLEY, QUINN, RAPP, RAVENSTAHL, READSHAW, REICHLEY, ROEBUCK, ROSS, SAINATO, SANTARSIERO, SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SONNEY, STABACK, SWANGER, THOMAS, TOEPEL, VEREB, VULAKOVICH, WAGNER, WATSON, WHITE, YOUNGBLOOD AND HESS, FEBRUARY 17, 2011

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
FEBRUARY 17, 2011

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of March 2011 as "National Women's History
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, From the August 18, 1587, birth of Virginia Dare,
4 the first child born to English parents in the Americas, through
5 the first decade of the 21st century, Pennsylvania women and
6 women nationwide have made and continue to make historic
7 contributions to the strength and greatness of our nation and
8 this Commonwealth in many recorded and unrecorded ways,
9 including the struggle for enfranchisement and women's rights;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, In a March 31, 1776, letter, Abigail Adams, the wife

1 of the second President of the United States and mother of the
2 sixth, wrote to her husband, "I long to hear that you have
3 declared an Independency -- and by the way in the new Code of
4 Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I
5 desire you would remember the Ladies, and be more generous and
6 favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited
7 power into the hands of the Husbands.... If perticular care and
8 attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment
9 a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in
10 which we have no voice, or Representation"; and

11 WHEREAS, In her letters and writings, Abigail Adams planted
12 the ideas that made both women and men of her time start to
13 think about the rights of women in a country founded on the
14 ideals of life, liberty and equality; and

15 WHEREAS, Generations later, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady
16 Stanton and Pennsylvanian Lucretia Mott embodied the first
17 generation of women's rights activists by working to secure
18 women's enfranchisement; and

19 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania played a prominent role in the suffrage
20 movement with Philadelphia being a hotbed of feminist agitation;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, In 1868, Susan B. Anthony read her "Declaration of
23 Rights of the Women of the United States," modeled after the
24 Declaration of Independence, in front of Philadelphia's
25 Independence Hall; and

26 WHEREAS, It was the lesser-known suffragists, such as
27 Pennsylvanians Dora Kelly Lewis and Caroline Katzenstein, who
28 inherited the struggle from Anthony, Stanton and Mott and
29 oversaw the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the
30 Constitution of the United States, which gave women the right to

1 vote on August 18, 1920; and

2 WHEREAS, Other lesser-known Pennsylvania women who were
3 active in the suffrage movement included Ann Davies, Florence
4 Kelley, Ann Preston and Emma Guffey Miller; and

5 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania women and women nationwide paved the
6 way by suffering violence and threats of violence, jail and
7 public ridicule during their struggles to eliminate gender,
8 racial, social and cultural barriers to economic and political
9 participation; and

10 WHEREAS, From civil rights activists Ida Wells-Barnett, Mary
11 McLeod Bethune, Eleanor Roosevelt and Rosa Parks to lesser-known
12 Elizabeth Jennings Brown who, not unlike Rosa Parks, became
13 frustrated with her inability to freely use privately owned
14 public transportation in New York City, women have long
15 struggled to secure equal and fair treatment for all; and

16 WHEREAS, The commitment of women to gender and racial
17 equality has resulted in the ascension of women in politics and
18 government; and

19 WHEREAS, Martha G. Speiser, Alice M. Bentley, Helen Grimes
20 and Sarah M. Gallaher were among a group of eight women first
21 elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1923;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Crystal Bird Fauset, who helped establish the
24 Swarthmore College Institute of Race Relations, became the first
25 African-American woman to be elected to the Pennsylvania House
26 of Representatives, at the time representing Philadelphia's 13th
27 Legislative District; and

28 WHEREAS, In 1916, Jeanette Rankin of Montana became the first
29 woman to be elected to the United States House of
30 Representatives; in 1965, Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii became

1 the first Asian-American woman so elected; and in 1969, Shirley
2 Chisholm became the first African-American woman elected to the
3 United States House of Representatives; and

4 WHEREAS, Shirley Chisholm was an outspoken advocate for women
5 and people of color during her seven terms in Congress; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1959, Juanita Kidd Stout became the first
7 African-American woman in the nation to win election to a court
8 of record when she won election to the Philadelphia Municipal
9 Court; and

10 WHEREAS, Juanita Kidd Stout made history a second time in
11 1988 when her appointment to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court made
12 her the first African-American woman to serve on a state supreme
13 court; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1964, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine became the
15 first woman nominated for President of the United States by a
16 major political party, and, in 1984, Geraldine Ferraro was
17 selected to run for Vice President, followed by Sarah Palin in
18 2008; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1990, Dr. Antonia Novello was sworn in as United
20 States Surgeon General, becoming the first woman and the first
21 Latina appointed to that position; and

22 WHEREAS, From the Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor, who became
23 the first woman to serve as an Associate Justice of the United
24 States Supreme Court in 1981, to the Honorable Ruth Bader
25 Ginsburg, who was appointed as an Associate Justice to that
26 court in 1993, to the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor, who rose from
27 the public housing projects of the Bronx to nomination and
28 confirmation as the first Puerto Rican-American to serve as an
29 Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 2009,
30 and to Sandra Schultz Newman and Debra Todd who were the first

1 and second women elected to Pennsylvania's highest court,
2 respectively, women have broken the glass ceiling in all
3 branches of government; and

4 WHEREAS, Currently, 72 women hold statewide executive offices
5 nationwide; and

6 WHEREAS, Women hold a record number 1,718 seats in state
7 legislatures nationwide; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2009, the New Hampshire State Senate was the
9 first state legislative chamber to have a female majority with
10 thirteen women and eleven men; and

11 WHEREAS, With her election as State Treasurer in 1988,
12 Katherine Baker Knoll became the first woman in this
13 Commonwealth to be elected to a Statewide row office and the
14 first woman to serve as Lieutenant Governor when she was sworn
15 in as Pennsylvania's 30th Lieutenant Governor in 2003; and

16 WHEREAS, From Madeleine Korbelt Albright, the first female
17 Secretary of State, to Condoleezza Rice, the first African-
18 American woman to serve as Secretary of State, and to Hillary
19 Rodham Clinton, the first First Lady to win a United States
20 Senate seat, to run for the United States presidency and to
21 later serve as Secretary of State, American women continue to
22 reach for pinnacles of elected and political office nationally
23 and internationally; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1987, the United States Congress, encouraged by
25 petition of the National Women's History Project, adopted the
26 first resolution to recognize the entire month of March as
27 "Women's History Month" in order to commemorate the
28 accomplishments and contributions of women; and

29 WHEREAS, In 1998, President William J. Clinton signed the
30 "Women's Progress Commemoration Act" into law on the 150th

1 anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first national
2 congregation on the condition of women in the United States, for
3 the purpose of commemorating, celebrating and preserving women's
4 history; and

5 WHEREAS, American women, including many Pennsylvania women,
6 have been leaders, not only in securing their own rights of
7 suffrage, but also in the abolitionist movement, the
8 emancipation movement, the suffrage movement, the labor movement
9 and the civil and equal rights movements; and

10 WHEREAS, 2011 marks the 31st anniversary of the National
11 Women's History Project; and

12 WHEREAS, The National Women's History Project began with a
13 proclamation by President Jimmy Carter that declared the week of
14 March 8, 1980, as the first National Women's History Week; and

15 WHEREAS, The recognition of March as "Women's History Month"
16 has highlighted the numerous contributions of women to the
17 progression of American society and their position at the
18 forefront of movements that created a more fair and just society
19 for all people; therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize March
21 2011 as "National Women's History Month" in Pennsylvania and
22 invite the women, men and children of this Commonwealth to
23 continue to explore the many roles women played and continue to
24 play to secure a just and fair democracy, to explore the
25 contributions of women to the greatness of this Commonwealth and
26 the nation and to celebrate "National Women's History Month
27 2011" with the theme of "Our History is Our Strength."