

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 559 Session of  
2012

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, MICCARELLI, KORTZ, BISHOP, BRENNAN,  
MILLARD, BROWNLEE, GEORGE, SCAVELLO, BARRAR, CALTAGIRONE,  
MYERS, MIRABITO, BARBIN, ELLIS, CONKLIN, GEIST, SONNEY, ROSS,  
SWANGER, MANN, KILLION, HENNESSEY, FRANKEL, KOTIK, GOODMAN,  
MAHONEY, BRADFORD, DIGIROLAMO, CLYMER, GODSHALL, YOUNGBLOOD,  
WHEATLEY, VEREB, RAVENSTAHL, FABRIZIO, ROEBUCK, DAVIDSON,  
D. COSTA, DALEY AND MURT, FEBRUARY 3, 2012

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
FEBRUARY 3, 2012

## A RESOLUTION

1 Expressing condolences and appreciation of the life of James N.  
2 Harper who passed away December 19, 2011.

3 WHEREAS, James N. "Jim" Harper, the son of Clementine and  
4 Wilson Harper, Sr., was born September 28, 1941, in Chester; and

5 WHEREAS, James was one of four brothers, attended the Chester  
6 School District until the 11th grade and graduated from Upper  
7 Darby High School; and

8 WHEREAS, James first joined Laborers' International Union of  
9 North America Local 413 in June of 1960; and

10 WHEREAS, James first used the union dollars that he earned  
11 during summer employment to attend West Virginia State  
12 University; and

13 WHEREAS, James was active in extracurricular activities  
14 including teaching neighborhood children how to improve their  
15 reading and writing skills; and

1 WHEREAS, While at West Virginia State University, James  
2 developed a program to bring children, parents and school  
3 administrators to the college for open-house activities that  
4 continue today; and

5 WHEREAS, James led civil rights demonstrations in Charleston,  
6 West Virginia, and participated in the Reserve Officers'  
7 Training Corps; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1965, after graduating from West Virginia State  
9 University, James attended graduate school at The Pennsylvania  
10 State University; and

11 WHEREAS, During this time, James continued mentoring youth,  
12 worked to reduce street gang tensions and taught and wrote  
13 papers on black history which were read by students and adults;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, James served in the Vietnam War after graduating  
16 from The Pennsylvania State University, leaving behind two  
17 children from his union with Betty Harper, Terria and James Jr.;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, James attained the rank of captain and received  
20 several decorations before he returned to a teaching position at  
21 The Pennsylvania State University and rejoined Laborers' Local  
22 413 in 1974; and

23 WHEREAS, In 1977, James was elected Business Manager of Local  
24 413 where he stood solidly behind the union's commitment to  
25 "Unity, Education, Safety and Community"; and

26 WHEREAS, James believed that the more the union and its  
27 friends worked together towards these basic goals, the more the  
28 union would succeed and grow; and

29 WHEREAS, Having played varsity sports in high school, youth  
30 athletics remained an important part of James' life, so he and

1 Tom Crews organized the Black Panthers Football Team and worked  
2 with Bennie Wright, coach of the Bennett Raiders, and Marty  
3 Dill, coach of the Chester Mustangs, and others, to form a  
4 football league in Chester; and

5 WHEREAS, Over a ten-year period, thousands of children were  
6 involved in their football league as players and cheerleaders,  
7 and James continued to coach football, basketball and baseball  
8 for more than 30 years while encouraging the members of Local  
9 413 to be committed to the youth of Chester; and

10 WHEREAS, James gave exemplary service to his country, his  
11 community and his family, making not just an impression, but an  
12 impact upon the world in which he lived until Monday, December  
13 19, 2011, when James entered into the arms of our Heavenly  
14 Father; and

15 WHEREAS, Jim leaves behind, to cherish his legacy, daughter  
16 Terria D. Harper; son James N. Harper and his wife, Tara;  
17 brother Pastor Meredith Harper and his wife, Beverley; beloved  
18 aunt Geraldine H. Lewis; sister-in-law, Idora Harper; three  
19 grandchildren, Teesha Harper, Semaje Harper and James N. Harper,  
20 III; a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, the members of  
21 Laborers' Local 413 and many friends; therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
23 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recognize James "Jim" Harper and  
24 his life as a community leader, military veteran and important  
25 figure in the history of the City of Chester, Pennsylvania.