

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 771 Session of  
2012

INTRODUCED BY COHEN, BRENNAN, BRIGGS, V. BROWN, CALTAGIRONE,  
CLYMER, FREEMAN, GEORGE, GINGRICH, HARKINS, HENNESSEY, JAMES,  
JOSEPHS, MAHONEY, MANN, MILLARD, MURT, SCAVELLO, SCHMOTZER,  
STABACK, STURLA, WILLIAMS, YOUNGBLOOD AND SWANGER,  
JUNE 13, 2012

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JUNE 13, 2012

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the year 2012 as "The Year of Religious Diversity"  
2 in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, William Penn, a devout Quaker, offered Pennsylvania  
4 as a "Holy Experiment," where all would be free to practice  
5 their religion in whatever manner they saw fit; and

6 WHEREAS, William Penn's Declaration of Rights in 1677 assured  
7 that "no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or  
8 support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry  
9 against his consent"; and

10 WHEREAS, In order to assure that government would abstain  
11 from favoring one religion over another, William Penn also  
12 declared that "no preference shall ever be given by law to any  
13 religious establishment or modes of worship"; and

14 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's Benjamin Franklin welcomed all  
15 religions, donated funds to the construction of their churches,  
16 meeting houses and synagogues and further promoted the

1 construction of an auditorium where all would be welcome to  
2 preach, including Muslims; and

3 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is now home to Christians, including  
4 many Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant denominations; Quakers;  
5 Jews of Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reformed  
6 congregations; Mormons; Muslims of Shia, Sunni, Sufi and others;  
7 Unitarians; Buddhists; Hindus; Sikhs; Taoists; and other  
8 religious traditions, as well as many who claim no religious  
9 affiliation and nonbelievers; and

10 WHEREAS, Among the religious traditions practiced in  
11 Pennsylvania, there are many sacred or holy texts, such as the  
12 books of the Bible, Talmud, Koran, Book of Mormon, Veda,  
13 Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, The Four Books and Five Classics of  
14 Confucius, Tao-te-ching (The Way and Its Power), Tipitaka and  
15 others; and

16 WHEREAS, These revered books impart great wisdom and beauty  
17 to believers and are appreciated and respected by nonbelievers  
18 as well; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize and  
20 celebrate the religious diversity encompassed by Pennsylvania as  
21 a fulfillment of the vision of William Penn; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the  
23 year 2012 as "The Year of Religious Diversity" throughout this  
24 Commonwealth and continue to welcome all to Pennsylvania in the  
25 spirit of our founder.