
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 774 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY BAKER, HENNESSEY, BENNINGHOFF, WARD, GREINER,
KIRKLAND, WHEELAND, THOMAS, VEREB, MURT, MILLARD, SACCONI,
D. COSTA, ENGLISH, BARRAR, PICKETT, KAVULICH, STAATS,
HEFFLEY, CAUSER, DUSH, SONNEY, BIZZARRO, MARSICO, DIGIROLAMO,
PASHINSKI, NEILSON, RAPP, ZIMMERMAN, READSHAW, GROVE, ROSS,
GINGRICH, PAYNE, MILNE, MAJOR, DeLUCA AND FARINA,
APRIL 5, 2016

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
APRIL 5, 2016

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of May 2 through 8, 2016, as "American
2 Religious History Week" in Pennsylvania to recognize the
3 impact of religious beliefs on America's history.

4 WHEREAS, Religious faith was not only important in official
5 American life during the periods of discovery, exploration,
6 colonization and growth, but has also been acknowledged and
7 incorporated into all three branches of American Federal
8 Government from their very beginning; and

9 WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States affirmed this
10 self-evident fact in a unanimous ruling declaring "This is a
11 religious people ... From the discovery of this continent to the
12 present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation";
13 and

14 WHEREAS, The first act of America's first Congress in 1774
15 was to ask a minister to open with prayer and to lead Congress

1 in the reading of four chapters of the Bible; and

2 WHEREAS, The Liberty Bell was named for the Biblical
3 inscription from Leviticus 25:10, which passage of scripture is
4 emblazoned around it: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land, to
5 all the inhabitants thereof"; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1782, Congress pursued a plan to print a Bible
7 that would be "a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use
8 of schools" and therefore approved the production of the first
9 English language Bible printed in America that contained the
10 congressional endorsement that "the United States in Congress
11 assembled ... recommend this edition of the Bible to the
12 inhabitants of the United States"; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in
14 Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin declared, "God governs in the
15 affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground
16 without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise
17 without His aid? ... Without His concurring aid, we shall
18 succeed in this political building no better than the builders
19 of Babel"; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1853, the United States Senate declared that the
21 Founding Fathers "had no fear or jealousy of religion itself,
22 nor did they wish to see us an irreligious people ... they did
23 not intend to spread over all the public authorities and the
24 whole public action of the nation the dead and revolting
25 spectacle of atheistical apathy"; and

26 WHEREAS, Beginning in 1904 and continuing for the next half-
27 century, the Federal Government printed and distributed *The Life*
28 *and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* for the use of Members of
29 Congress because of the important teachings it contained; and

30 WHEREAS, The constitutions of each of the 50 states, either

1 in the preamble or body, explicitly recognize or express
2 gratitude to God; and

3 WHEREAS, President Andrew Jackson declared that the Bible "is
4 the rock on which our Republic rests"; and

5 WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln declared that the Bible
6 "is the best gift God has given to men ... But for it, we could
7 not know right from wrong"; and

8 WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt not only led the
9 nation in a six-minute prayer during D-Day on June 6, 1944, but
10 he also declared that "If we will not prepare to give all that
11 we have and all that we are to preserve Christian civilization
12 in our land, we shall go to destruction"; and

13 WHEREAS, President John F. Kennedy declared that "The rights
14 of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the
15 hand of God"; and

16 WHEREAS, Every other President has similarly recognized the
17 role of God and religious faith in the public life of America;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, All sessions of the United States Supreme Court
20 begin with the Court's Marshal announcing, "God save the United
21 States and this honorable court"; and

22 WHEREAS, Justice John Jay, an author of *The Federalist Papers*
23 and original Justice of the United States Supreme Court, urged
24 "The most effectual means of securing the continuance of our
25 civil and religious liberties is always to remember with
26 reverence and gratitude the Source from which they flow"; and

27 WHEREAS, Numerous others of the most important American
28 government leaders, institutions, monuments, buildings and
29 landmarks both openly acknowledge and incorporate religious
30 words, symbols and imagery into official venues; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
2 week of May 2 through 8, 2016, as "American Religious History
3 Week" in Pennsylvania to recognize the impact of religious
4 beliefs on America's history; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives affirm the rich
6 spiritual and diverse religious history of our nation from its
7 founding to the current day; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, The House of Representatives reject, in the
9 strongest possible terms, any effort to remove, obscure or
10 purposely omit such history from our nation's public buildings
11 and educational resources.