

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 579 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY BARBIN, CUTLER, MURT, DUSH, PETRARCA, MILLARD,
DEASY, NEILSON, SCHLOSSBERG, KORTZ, BAKER, PASHINSKI,
DONATUCCI, CONKLIN, DIGIROLAMO, HENNESSEY, GREINER,
CALTAGIRONE, LONGIETTI, HELM, READSHAW AND BOBACK,
OCTOBER 25, 2017

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
OCTOBER 25, 2017

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating October 28, 2017, as "Charter of Privileges Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, William Penn was born into nobility in 1644, as the
4 only son of British war hero Admiral William Penn; and

5 WHEREAS, William Penn became a Quaker minister, lawyer and
6 writer who was imprisoned five times for his religious
7 convictions; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1668, at 24 years of age, William Penn met Josiah
9 Coale and discussed establishing a utopia in America; and

10 WHEREAS, William Penn began to write pamphlets and debated
11 religious leaders, contending that religion should free itself
12 from outward observances and confessions of faith and focus on
13 obedience to God in one's heart; and

14 WHEREAS, For this, William Penn was imprisoned without trial
15 for eight months in the Tower of London at the urging of the
16 Bishop of London; and

1 WHEREAS, William Penn used his time of imprisonment to write
2 the seminal book of Quaker virtues, "No Cross, No Crown"; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1675, William Penn wrote "England's Present
4 Interest Considered," which promoted religious liberty as the
5 driver of economic prosperity; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1676, William Penn, as trustee of New Jersey,
7 guaranteed religious liberty in "The Charter of Fundamental Laws
8 of West New Jersey"; and

9 WHEREAS, On March 4, 1681, King Charles II of England granted
10 William Penn a charter for land in the Province of Pennsylvania
11 in payment for a large debt the king owed to Penn's father; and

12 WHEREAS, In April 1682, William Penn, as Proprietor of the
13 Province of Pennsylvania, authored the "Frame of Government of
14 Pennsylvania," which guaranteed religious freedom; and

15 WHEREAS, In August 1682, William Penn arrived aboard the
16 *Welcome* with passengers of diverse nationalities and faiths who
17 joined in his "Holy Experiment," where men might worship God
18 according to their own conscience; and

19 WHEREAS, During his first stay in the Province of
20 Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1684, William Penn demonstrated the
21 ideals of human dignity, individual rights and self-government
22 in dealing with Native Americans, the Provincial Assembly,
23 freemen, planters and adventurers; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1697, William Penn first called for colonial
25 unification; and

26 WHEREAS, During his second stay in the Province of
27 Pennsylvania from 1699 to 1701, William Penn authored the
28 "Charter of Privileges"; and

29 WHEREAS, This governing document, effective October 28, 1701,
30 guaranteed privileges to future generations that included

1 establishing religious liberty, ensuring the Provincial
2 Assembly's right to elect its own officers, promoting tripartite
3 government and securing the right of freemen to vote without
4 property requirements; and

5 WHEREAS, The charter further guaranteed America's first
6 freedom, freedom of religion from government; and

7 WHEREAS, Known as America's "Magna Carta" of religious
8 liberty, the charter was the most famous of all colonial
9 constitutions and served as Pennsylvania's Constitution until
10 the American Revolution; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1751, the Provincial Assembly commissioned a
12 foundry in England to forge a bell to properly commemorate and
13 celebrate the 50th anniversary of William Penn's "Charter of
14 Privileges"; and

15 WHEREAS, After being recast twice by Pass and Stow, the bell
16 was hung in the State House in Philadelphia and inscribed with
17 the prophetic words from Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim liberty
18 throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof"; and

19 WHEREAS, On July 8, 1776, the bell, later renamed the Liberty
20 Bell, proclaimed the Declaration of Independence at the founding
21 of a new nation; and

22 WHEREAS, Benjamin Franklin wrote the first constitution of
23 the independent state in September 1776 and chose as
24 Pennsylvania's first freedom the liberty of conscience of
25 religious profession and worship; and

26 WHEREAS, The guarantee of liberty of conscience served as the
27 moral foundation of our Republic of Virtue; and

28 WHEREAS, Our founding documents, the Declaration of
29 Independence and the Constitution of the United States, were
30 adopted in Philadelphia; and

1 WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United
2 States and writer of the Declaration of Independence, recognized
3 William Penn's influence upon the nation, noting that he was
4 "without doubt, the greatest lawgiver the world has produced";
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Voltaire, a French philosopher and advocate of
7 religious toleration, praised William Penn by saying that he
8 "might with reason, boast of having brought down upon earth the
9 Golden Age, which in all probability, never had any real
10 existence but in his dominions"; and

11 WHEREAS, Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United
12 States, bestowed honorary citizenship upon William Penn as the
13 first great hero of American liberty, one of only eight foreign
14 nationals to be so honored; and

15 WHEREAS, The Liberty Bell, which celebrates William Penn's
16 "Charter of Privileges," continues to proclaim liberty
17 throughout the world; therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate October
19 28, 2017, as "Charter of Privileges Day" in Pennsylvania.