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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 181 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY ARGALL AND MENSCH, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

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A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the 283rd anniversary of "Schwenkfelder  
2 Thanksgiving Day" on September 24, 2017, in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The Schwenkfelders are the only Protestant sect of  
4 the Spiritualist branch of the Radical Reformation, with roots  
5 in the Protestant Reformation that still exist today; and

6 WHEREAS, The Schwenkfelders are named after Protestant  
7 Reformer Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig, a contemporary of Martin  
8 Luther; and

9 WHEREAS, The Schwenkfelders originally lived in Silesia, a  
10 region annexed to Poland after World War II, and were  
11 periodically persecuted for their religious faith after the  
12 death of Schwenckfeld von Ossig in 1561; and

13 WHEREAS, In order to avoid further persecution, the  
14 Schwenkfelders fled their homeland in 1726 and emigrated to  
15 Saxony, Germany, under sanctuary provided by Count Nicholas  
16 Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian Church; and

17 WHEREAS, With the assistance of Mennonites in Holland, the  
18 Schwenkfelders emigrated to Pennsylvania between 1731 and 1738;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, The day after one of their early arrivals in  
3 Pennsylvania, on September 24, the Schwenkfelders gathered for a  
4 time of worship to thank God for their safe arrival in the new  
5 land of freedom; and

6 WHEREAS, Annually thereafter on that same date, the  
7 Schwenkfelders met in worship to honor that occasion and called  
8 it Gedächtnis-tag, or "Day of Remembrance," in recognition of  
9 the hardships their ancestors endured for the sake of religious  
10 freedom; and

11 WHEREAS, Currently the Schwenkfelder Church continues the  
12 tradition by holding a service on the Sunday closest to  
13 September 24 to celebrate Gedächtnis-tag; and

14 WHEREAS, Gedächtnis-tag is considered the oldest continuous  
15 celebration of thanksgiving in the United States; therefore be  
16 it

17 RESOLVED, That the Senate commemorate the 283rd anniversary  
18 of "Schwenkfelder Thanksgiving Day" on September 24, 2017, in  
19 Pennsylvania.