

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 100 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY KENYATTA, INNAMORATO, RABB, ISAACSON, KINSEY, DONATUCCI, HILL-EVANS, HARRIS, KORTZ, O'MARA, SIMS, MURT, FREEMAN, BURGOS, McCLINTON, WEBSTER, READSHAW, SCHLOSSBERG, SOLOMON, SAPPEY, DALEY, HOHENSTEIN, A. DAVIS, BURNS, SCHWEYER, NEILSON, ROEBUCK, MULLINS, BULLOCK, DAWKINS AND MARKOSEK, MARCH 18, 2019

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, MARCH 18, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the life and significant accomplishments of Bayard
 2 Rustin, an influential and often overlooked leader in our
 3 nation's history.

4 WHEREAS, Born on March 17, 1912, Bayard Rustin was one of 12
 5 children raised by his grandparents in West Chester; and

6 WHEREAS, It was at his family home in West Chester that Mr.
 7 Rustin's lifelong commitment to nonviolent activism began
 8 through both a Quaker upbringing and the influence of his
 9 grandmother's participation in the National Association for the
 10 Advancement of Colored People; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1937, Mr. Rustin attended City College of New
 12 York, where he joined the Young Communist League USA because of
 13 its progressive views on racial justice, but left the group
 14 after it shifted its focus toward supporting the Soviet Union as
 15 opposed to fighting racial injustice in the United States; and

16 WHEREAS, Over the course of the next 10 years, Mr. Rustin

1 worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in advocating
2 for peace, labor rights and social equality, which included his
3 traveling to India to study the Gandhian philosophy of
4 nonviolence; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1941, Mr. Rustin served as a principal leader in
6 planning the March on Washington to protest discrimination in
7 the armed forces and defense sector, in response to which
8 President Franklin D. Roosevelt preemptively issued an executive
9 order ending segregation in the defense industries; and

10 WHEREAS, A staunch opponent of war, Mr. Rustin was arrested
11 and jailed in 1944 after refusing to register for the draft; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1953, Mr. Rustin was fired from FOR because he
13 was gay, which became one of many instances where he faced
14 discrimination on account of his sexual orientation; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1956, Mr. Rustin met with Dr. Martin Luther King,
16 Jr., to show his support for the Montgomery Bus Boycott and
17 advocate for the use of nonviolent tactics in protesting racial
18 injustices in the United States; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Rustin's influence was monumental in encouraging
20 Dr. King to accept pacifism as a way of life and was
21 instrumental in nonviolence becoming a cornerstone of the Civil
22 Rights Movement; and

23 WHEREAS, Dr. King worked closely with Mr. Rustin and leaned
24 on his brilliant strategies and organizational skills, which
25 were on full display in the 1963 March on Washington; and

26 WHEREAS, In 1963, Mr. Rustin served as the chief organizer
27 for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, a landmark
28 event credited with facilitating passage of the 1964 Civil
29 Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and

30 WHEREAS, Throughout the remainder of his life, Mr. Rustin

1 would go on to combat social injustice, including serving as a
2 champion for gay rights; and

3 WHEREAS, Bayard Rustin died on August 24, 1987, but his fight
4 for nonviolent activism and social justice continues to live on
5 among the modern day activists who follow in his footsteps;
6 therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the life
8 and significant accomplishments of Bayard Rustin, an influential
9 and often overlooked leader in our nation's history.