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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 63 Session of  
2019

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INTRODUCED BY MENSCH, KEARNEY, GORDNER, BROWNE, MARTIN, KILLION,  
PHILLIPS-HILL, COSTA, FARNESE, FONTANA, COLLETT, STREET AND  
DINNIMAN, MARCH 27, 2019

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, MARCH 27, 2019

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A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the centennial of the March First Movement and  
2 First Korean Congress and noting their historic roles in  
3 Korea's nationwide resistance against imperial Japan, and  
4 designating April 12 through 14, 2019, as "The First Korean  
5 Congress Days".

6 WHEREAS, Early 20th century Korean nationalists spurred  
7 independence movements in India, China, Philippines and other  
8 colonized countries and laid the foundation for provisional  
9 governments and governments-in-exile and, in 1948, the First  
10 Republic of Korea; and

11 WHEREAS, On March 1, 1919, 33 activists assembled at a  
12 restaurant in Seoul to adopt a recently drafted Korean  
13 Declaration of Independence; and

14 WHEREAS, The declaration was publicly read that day at  
15 Seoul's Pagoda Park and other appointed places; and

16 WHEREAS, Japanese colonial officials received a written  
17 version; and

18 WHEREAS, As translated, the declaration begins:

19 We hereby declare that Korea is an independent state and

1           that Koreans are a self-governing people. We proclaim it  
2           to the nations of the world in affirmation of the  
3           principle of the equality of all nations, and we proclaim  
4           it to our posterity, preserving in perpetuity the right  
5           of national survival;

6   and

7           WHEREAS, Approximately 2 million Koreans joined in  
8   widespread, nonviolent mass demonstrations; and

9           WHEREAS, The following spring, Japanese military forces  
10   brutally suppressed the citizen-led campaign known as the March  
11   First Movement; and

12          WHEREAS, More than 7,000 demonstrators were killed, 16,000  
13   wounded and 46,000 arrested during this period of Korean  
14   resistance; and

15          WHEREAS, The First Korean Congress convened in Philadelphia  
16   from April 14 through 16, 1919, to broadly declare Korean  
17   nationalism and activate supporters in the United States; and

18          WHEREAS, Dr. Philip Jaisohn, a Korean political refugee who  
19   settled in Delaware County in the 1880s, worked to establish  
20   Philadelphia as a central overseas base; and

21          WHEREAS, Dr. Jaisohn and other activists recognized  
22   Philadelphia as a symbol of freedom for oppressed people and a  
23   site where the First and Second Congresses of the United States  
24   drafted foundational documents; and

25          WHEREAS, The Korean Information Bureau and a League of  
26   Friends of Korea chapter later formed in Philadelphia; and

27          WHEREAS, From April 12 through 14, 2019, the Korean-American  
28   community is coming together in Philadelphia to celebrate the  
29   centennial of the March First Movement and First Korean  
30   Congress; and

1       WHEREAS, The First Korean Congress Centennial Celebration  
2 Committee is presenting events recognizing this milestone and  
3 the friendship between Korea and the United States; and

4       WHEREAS, The Korean American Association of Greater  
5 Philadelphia, Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation, Council of  
6 Korean Churches of Greater Philadelphia and Philadelphia Chapter  
7 of the National Unification Advisory Council of the Republic of  
8 Korea are represented on the committee; and

9       WHEREAS, The Korean Senior Citizens Association of Greater  
10 Philadelphia, Syngman Rhee Memorial Foundation, Mid-Atlantic  
11 Chapter of the National Association for Korean Schools, Korean  
12 American Association of Southern New Jersey, Philadelphia  
13 Chapter of the Young Korean Academy (Hung Sa Dahn), Greater  
14 Philadelphia Korean American Association of Five Northern  
15 Provinces, Korean Veterans Association of the Philadelphia  
16 Region and Delaware Korean American Association are also  
17 represented on the committee; and

18       WHEREAS, A symposium on the First Korean Congress,  
19 reenactment of a First Korean Congress-led march, centennial  
20 concert at Church of the Holy Trinity in Rittenhouse Square and  
21 closing celebration are slated; and

22       WHEREAS, The Senate express sincere appreciation for the acts  
23 of nonviolent resistance and ideals of independence associated  
24 with the rise of Korean nationalism; and

25       WHEREAS, The Senate further recognize the contributions of  
26 Korean Americans in our Commonwealth and beyond; therefore be it

27       RESOLVED, That Senate commemorate the centennial of the March  
28 First Movement and First Korean Congress and note their historic  
29 roles in Korea's nationwide resistance against imperial Japan;  
30 and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to  
2 the First Korean Congress Centennial Celebration Committee.