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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 638 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY MALONEY, BENNINGHOFF, BROOKS, R. BROWN, BURNS,  
CIRESI, CONKLIN, SCHLEGEL CULVER, A. DAVIS, GAINNEY, GAYDOS,  
GREINER, HENNESSEY, HILL-EVANS, IRVIN, JAMES, KNOWLES,  
LONGIETTI, M. MACKENZIE, R. MACKENZIE, MENTZER, MOUL,  
NEILSON, OWLETT, PICKETT, PISCIOTTANO, RYAN, SAINATO,  
SCHLOSSBERG, STAATS, STRUZZI, THOMAS, WEBSTER, WHEELAND,  
D. WILLIAMS, ZABEL AND ZIMMERMAN, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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AN ACT

1 Designating September 27 of each year as "First Responders Day."

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the First  
6 Responders Day Act.

7 Section 2. Legislative findings and declarations.

8 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

9 (1) Our first responders, who are police, fire,  
10 emergency medical service (EMS) and public health personnel,  
11 work selflessly on behalf of the people of this Commonwealth,  
12 regardless of the risk or hazard, and truly are citizens  
13 serving the community.

14 (2) Most Pennsylvanians have benefited in some way from

1 the courageous service of first responders across this  
2 Commonwealth.

3 (3) First responders carry out the critical role of  
4 protecting and ensuring public safety in emergency  
5 situations.

6 (4) The men and women who bravely serve as first  
7 responders have found themselves on the front lines of  
8 homeland defense in the war against terrorism.

9 (5) First responders are called upon in the event of  
10 natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding  
11 and pandemics.

12 (6) More than 100,000 first responders perform these  
13 crucial services in this Commonwealth.

14 (7) Approximately 30,000 sworn police officers from  
15 State, city and county law enforcement agencies protect lives  
16 and property, detect and prevent crimes, uphold the law and  
17 ensure justice.

18 (8) Tens of thousands of firefighters, including  
19 approximately 50,000 volunteers and 10,000 career  
20 firefighters, provide fire suppression, EMS, search and  
21 rescue, hazardous materials response, terrorism response and  
22 critical fire prevention and safety education.

23 (9) Approximately 60,000 emergency services  
24 professionals in this Commonwealth respond to and treat a  
25 variety of life-threatening emergencies, from cardiac and  
26 respiratory arrest to traumatic injuries.

27 (10) First responders make personal sacrifices to  
28 protect our communities, as witnessed in the aftermath of the  
29 terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and of the natural  
30 destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina, Irene and Sandy.

1 They are called every day to protect individuals and property  
2 in cities and towns across this Commonwealth.

3 (11) Many law enforcement officers die in the line of  
4 duty in the United States each year, including nine killed in  
5 2020 in Pennsylvania alone.

6 (12) More than 100 firefighters are killed in the line  
7 of duty across the United States each year and thousands more  
8 are injured.

9 (13) EMS answers more than 20 million patient calls  
10 every year, and many medics are injured on the job, have been  
11 assaulted by patients or have been exposed to infectious  
12 diseases.

13 (14) EMS personnel in the United States have a fatality  
14 rate of more than twice the national average for all other  
15 workers.

16 (15) Thousands of first responders have made the  
17 ultimate sacrifice.

18 (16) These men and women, by their dedicated  
19 professionalism, have earned our gratitude and respect.

20 Section 3. First Responders Day.

21 (a) Designation.--September 27 of each year is designated as  
22 "First Responders Day."

23 (b) Proclamation.--The Governor shall issue annually a  
24 proclamation calling upon all public schools and educational  
25 institutions to observe "First Responders Day" and to conduct  
26 exercises recognizing the contributions and remembering the  
27 sacrifices that first responders have made.

28 (c) Limitations.--"First Responders Day" may not be a paid  
29 holiday or a day that school districts close.

30 Section 4. Effective date.

1        This act shall take effect immediately.