
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 331 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY KRAJEWSKI, RABB, HILL-EVANS, WAXMAN, KENYATTA,
KHAN, KINSEY, PROBST, BELLMON, DELLOSO, HADDOCK, CEPEDA-
FREYTIZ, DALEY AND BOYD, MARCH 5, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT, MARCH 5, 2024

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating April 9, 2024, as "Paul Robeson Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1898, Paul Robeson was born in
4 Princeton, New Jersey, to a father who had escaped slavery and
5 become a Presbyterian minister and a mother from a prominent
6 Philadelphia Quaker family; and

7 WHEREAS, At 17 years old, Paul Robeson graduated high school
8 as valedictorian and earned a full scholarship to Rutgers
9 University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, making him just the
10 third African American to attend the school; and

11 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson excelled at Rutgers as a member of the
12 Cap & Skull Honor Society, playing in four varsity sports,
13 including as a two-time All American in football, winning speech
14 and debate tournaments and graduating as valedictorian of his
15 class; and

16 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson then went on to Columbia University Law
17 School, where he graduated with a law degree in 1923; and

1 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson obtained a job at a New York law firm
2 but soon thereafter left the firm and ended his career as a
3 lawyer due to racial discrimination; and

4 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson next began to find work as an actor,
5 using his talents to promote African and African-American
6 history and culture as one of the first Black men to play
7 serious roles in the primarily White American theater; and

8 WHEREAS, Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Paul Robeson was a
9 widely acclaimed actor and singer, with songs such as his
10 trademark "Ol' Man River" and lead performances in Eugene
11 O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings" and "The Emperor Jones";
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson's "Othello" is still considered one of
14 the greatest American Shakespeare productions, and it was the
15 longest-running Shakespeare play in Broadway history; and

16 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson also experienced great international
17 success, as he spoke 20 languages and performed benefits
18 throughout the world in Europe and Africa, using his deep
19 baritone voice to promote social justice; and

20 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson was a staunch advocate for civil rights
21 and workers' rights, leading an anti-lynching campaign,
22 performing at equal housing rallies and fighting for the freedom
23 of Black Americans and oppressed peoples across the world; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1966, Paul Robeson moved in with his sister,
25 residing in her West Philadelphia home for the last 10 years of
26 his life, where he became a beloved fixture of the community;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson died on January 23, 1976, at 77 years
29 of age, in Philadelphia; and

30 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson's legacy lives on in this Commonwealth

1 at The Paul Robeson House & Museum in Philadelphia; and

2 WHEREAS, A true renaissance man, Paul Robeson used his
3 remarkable talents in various fields, overcoming racism and
4 prejudice to speak for peace, justice and equity across the
5 world; and

6 WHEREAS, Paul Robeson's outstanding lifetime accomplishments
7 as an athlete, actor, singer, scholar and political activist
8 have yet to be fully recognized by this Commonwealth; therefore
9 be it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate April
11 9, 2024, as "Paul Robeson Day" in Pennsylvania.