

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 685 Session of 2014

INTRODUCED BY MATZIE, KOTIK, MCNEILL, STERN, HENNESSEY, BIZZARRO, MILLARD, PASHINSKI, SACCONI, SCHLEGEL CULVER, MIRABITO, CALTAGIRONE, DIGIROLAMO, LUCAS, BOBACK, THOMAS, READSHAW, D. COSTA, FRANKEL, CLYMER, GROVE, GRELL, GOODMAN, GINGRICH, GIBBONS, MARSHALL, GILLEN, HARHART, MURT, ROEBUCK, WATSON, FLECK, QUINN AND FLYNN, MARCH 10, 2014

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, MARCH 10, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the week of March 12 through 15, 2014, as  
 2 "Pennsylvania History Days" and observing March 14, 2014, as  
 3 "Charter Day" in Pennsylvania.

4 WHEREAS, On March 4, 1681, King Charles II of England granted  
 5 William Penn a charter for land in the New World to make up for  
 6 a large debt that the king owed to Penn's father; and

7 WHEREAS, William Penn had initially decided to name the land  
 8 "Sylvania," which in Latin means "woods" and to which King  
 9 Charles II added the prefix "Penn" to the name in honor of  
 10 William Penn's father, Admiral Sir William Penn, who had served  
 11 England as a rear admiral and vice admiral of Ireland, a vice  
 12 admiral of England, a general in the first Dutch War and great  
 13 captain commander under the Duke of York; and

14 WHEREAS, William Penn wrote a Frame of Government of  
 15 Pennsylvania that established a democratic system containing  
 16 full freedom of religion, fair trials featuring independent

1 juries, assemblies consisting of elected representatives of the  
2 people and a separation of powers in the government, all ideas  
3 that later formed the crux of the Constitution of the United  
4 States; and

5 WHEREAS, William Penn therefore described Pennsylvania as his  
6 "holy experiment" and from it, he hoped, a nation based on  
7 justice would grow; and

8 WHEREAS, William Penn's charter exists as the formal  
9 beginning of the colony and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and  
10 through it William Penn established the first example of  
11 democracy in what would become the United States of America; and

12 WHEREAS, Our citizens benefit from learning more about the  
13 overall history of this Commonwealth from its founding until  
14 today and how the principles of governance within the  
15 Commonwealth date back to the beliefs of William Penn; and

16 WHEREAS, The history of Pennsylvania, from its founding by  
17 William Penn onward, exists as a kaleidoscope of stories and  
18 people with each area of this Commonwealth having multiple  
19 stories of history involving key characters and events that  
20 create and establish Pennsylvania's heritage; and

21 WHEREAS, The act of July 28, 1953 (P.L.676, No.210) provides  
22 for the observance of March 14 of each year as Charter Day and  
23 urges the people of this Commonwealth, the public schools and  
24 other educational institutions and patriotic, religious,  
25 historical and veterans' organizations to observe on that day  
26 the anniversary of the execution of the Royal Charter by King  
27 Charles II; and

28 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission,  
29 the Pennsylvania State Archives and the State Historical Records  
30 Advisory Board each works to inform our residents about the

1 Commonwealth's heritage, including sponsoring an annual Charter  
2 Day event in the State Museum of Pennsylvania; and

3 WHEREAS, This free event has included a presentation of the  
4 1681 Charter as well as information about Penn's Great Law of  
5 1682, the 1698 William Penn Family Bible, a William Penn  
6 reenactor, stories of Pennsylvania history and other programs;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has 23 other State historic sites and  
9 museums and numerous other historical organizations that  
10 continue to operate, largely thanks to the assistance of  
11 volunteers and other groups that have donated their money, time  
12 and other resources so that residents can remain well informed  
13 about the fabric of this Commonwealth's history; therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
15 week of March 12 through 15, 2014, as "Pennsylvania History  
16 Days" and observe March 14, 2014, as "Charter Day" in  
17 Pennsylvania; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the residents, schools, other educational  
19 institutions and patriotic, religious, historical and veterans  
20 groups be urged to participate with any and all Charter Day  
21 activities sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum  
22 Commission, the Pennsylvania State Archives, the State  
23 Historical Records Advisory Board, the 23 other State historic  
24 sites and museums or those offered by any of the many other  
25 historical organizations within this Commonwealth; and be it  
26 further

27 RESOLVED, That the volunteers and other residents who keep  
28 history alive through their support and work for the  
29 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Pennsylvania  
30 State Archives, the State Historical Records Advisory Board, the

1 23 other State historic sites and museums or through the  
2 numerous other historical organizations within this Commonwealth  
3 be honored for their efforts.