
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 980 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY SAPPEY, HILL-EVANS, SHUSTERMAN, MADDEN, HENNESSEY, YOUNGBLOOD, MURT, WILLIAMS, GALLOWAY, PASHINSKI, MENTZER, HOWARD, SONNEY, SCHLEGEL CULVER, KINSEY, SANCHEZ, DeLUCA, KIM, McCLINTON, HEFFLEY, WEBSTER, JONES, HOHENSTEIN, TOEPEL, CIRESI, LONGIETTI, HARRIS, ROZZI, ROEBUCK, T. DAVIS, DRISCOLL, THOMAS, BROOKS, DONATUCCI, SAMUELSON, NEILSON, ZABEL, READSHAW, GREEN AND KIRKLAND, AUGUST 28, 2020

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
AUGUST 28, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of September 2020 as "International
2 Underground Railroad Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania was a strategic and historic location
4 of freedom through the Underground Railroad; and

5 WHEREAS, Thousands of men and women risked their own freedom
6 to help freedom seekers escape bondage; and

7 WHEREAS, People such as Basil Biggs, Thomas and Frances
8 Scroggins Brown, Lucinda Bryant, Charles C. Burleigh, Martin R.
9 Delany, Robert Douglass, Jr., James Forten, William C.

10 Goodridge, Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, Dr. Francis J. LeMoyne,
11 Lucretia Mott, William Nesbit, William Parker, John Peck, Robert
12 Purvis, Sarah Forten Purvis, Dr. William Rutherford, Abraham
13 Shadd, Stephen Smith, Thaddeus Stevens, William Still, John
14 Vashon, Albert Vosburgh, William Whipper, John Greenleaf
15 Whittier, Lewis Woodson and others devoted their lives to this

1 cause; and

2 WHEREAS, The American Anti-Slavery Society was an interracial
3 organization dedicated to the entire abolition of slavery in the
4 United States; and

5 WHEREAS, The American Anti-Slavery Society was founded in
6 Philadelphia in 1833; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1851, freedom seekers and abolitionists defended
8 freedom at Christiana in Lancaster County; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1838, when Black men were deprived of their
10 established right to vote in this Commonwealth, African
11 Americans in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and their allies in the
12 General Assembly advocated for the restoration of
13 enfranchisement 32 years before the ratification of the 15th
14 Amendment to the Constitution of the United States restored
15 voting rights, thus showing that Pennsylvanians valued and
16 advocated for civil and human rights; and

17 WHEREAS, The Underground Railroad traced across Pennsylvania
18 with lecturers and a series of safe houses, agents, conductors
19 and stations, in a clandestine network that helped freedom
20 seekers realize freedom in Pennsylvania and elsewhere; and

21 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth should show appreciation for the
22 inspiring efforts of the people of Pennsylvania and all those
23 from around the world who have committed themselves to document
24 and share the Underground Railroad through the Pennsylvania
25 Civil War Sesquicentennial and Quest for Freedom programs that
26 connected Underground Railroad sites across this Commonwealth,
27 the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad
28 Network to Freedom program that lists 51 sites and centers in
29 Pennsylvania, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and
30 Cultural Organization's Sites of Memory designations; and

1 WHEREAS, Commonwealth agencies, institutions and
2 organizations such as the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum
3 Commission, Department of Community and Economic Development,
4 and the 14 Frederick Douglass Institutes across the Pennsylvania
5 State System of Higher Education continue to educate young
6 people about Pennsylvania's role and leadership; and

7 WHEREAS, "International Underground Railroad Month" provides
8 an opportunity for worldwide open dialogue that illuminates the
9 hopes that arise from freedom for all people; therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
11 month of September 2020 as "International Underground Railroad
12 Month" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor all those
14 who have fought and continue to fight for the freedom of all
15 peoples.