
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 82 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY COSTA, FONTANA, STREET, BREWSTER, L. WILLIAMS,
DINNIMAN, SCHWANK, K. WARD, LEACH, COLLETT, BLAKE, PHILLIPS-
HILL, HUGHES, SCARNATI, FOLMER, SANTARSIERO, BARTOLOTTA,
BROWNE, MUTH, YUDICHAK, BOSCOLA, A. WILLIAMS, VOGEL, FARNESE,
SABATINA, TARTAGLIONE, HAYWOOD, BAKER, KEARNEY AND CORMAN,
APRIL 10, 2019

INTRODUCED, APRIL 10, 2019

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Designating April 10, 2019, as "Stronger Than Hate Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, On October 27, 2018, tragedy struck Pittsburgh's
4 Squirrel Hill neighborhood, which is home to a vibrant, diverse
5 and loving Jewish community; and

6 WHEREAS, Several different Jewish houses of worship,
7 including Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Reform
8 have long been a part of the fabric of that community; and

9 WHEREAS, The Tree of Life synagogue building is home to three
10 congregations, Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, New Light and Dor
11 Hadash, each with its own distinct voice and faithful community
12 of thinkers and worshipers; and

13 WHEREAS, The coexistence of disparate congregations in the
14 Tree of Life building offered a spiritual place for a diverse
15 population of Jews living in Squirrel Hill and Pittsburgh; and

16 WHEREAS, With the exception of New York City, Pittsburgh is

1 the last Jewish community in the United States in which the
2 majority of its members still reside within the city, largely
3 because of the still-flourishing cultural and religious life of
4 the Squirrel Hill neighborhood; and

5 WHEREAS, As the popularity of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood
6 has grown, it has become a community that enjoys ethnic and
7 religious diversity, both holding onto its Jewish identity and
8 history and celebrating the gifts that new populations bring;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, While the General Assembly must remember in sorrow
11 the tragedy of the loss of 11 souls, we should also celebrate
12 their lives, their contributions to their community and the
13 family and friends who loved them; and

14 WHEREAS, Joyce Fienberg, who was a retired researcher at the
15 University of Pittsburgh and a community volunteer, was known
16 for her willingness to pitch in and help anywhere that she saw a
17 need; and

18 WHEREAS, Dr. Richard Gottfried was known for providing free
19 dental care to refugees and immigrants, his love of golf,
20 reading, running and fine wine; and

21 WHEREAS, Rose Mallinger, known as "Bubbie" by all of her
22 relatives, who worshiped at the Tree of Life Synagogue for more
23 than 60 years, was 97 years old and amazed all who encountered
24 her with her energy; and

25 WHEREAS, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz was known for his bowties, his
26 laugh and for being a skilled and compassionate doctor whose
27 practice was a safe place for HIV patients in the early years of
28 the disease; and

29 WHEREAS, Cecil Rosenthal, described as the "honorary mayor of
30 Squirrel Hill," was known for his concern for others and his

1 love of swimming; and

2 WHEREAS, David Rosenthal was known for his strong work ethic
3 and his love of anything related to the police or fire
4 department, and while the Rosenthal brothers lived with
5 intellectual disabilities, that did not stop them from having
6 rich, full lives that brought joy to all who encountered them;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Bernice Simon, a former nurse, died along side the
9 love of her life, husband, Sylvan Simon, a veteran and a retired
10 accountant, and the two of them were known for their sweet,
11 funny banter with one another and their love of the symphony;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Dan Stein, who was a salesman for a plumbing supply
14 company, a driver for a funeral home and a former substitute
15 teacher, was known for being quick to help others, unpretentious
16 and a great fundraiser for his congregation; and

17 WHEREAS, Melvin "Mel" Wax was an accountant who, after
18 retirement, made use of his unique abilities with numbers to
19 track Pittsburgh Pirates statistics and was known for his quick,
20 silly humor and his commitment to attending services every
21 single week; and

22 WHEREAS, Irving "Irv" Younger, who owned a realty company and
23 was a former high school baseball coach, was known for his
24 delight at becoming a grandfather and his willingness to help a
25 stranger; and

26 WHEREAS, On the morning of October 27, 2018, the victims
27 mentioned above and their fellow worshipers were beginning
28 services or setting up for their activities at the Tree of
29 Life*Or L'Simcha synagogue building; and

30 WHEREAS, A gunman entered these congregations and killed 11

1 citizens of this Commonwealth in the largest deadly act of anti-
2 Semitism in United States history; and

3 WHEREAS, Daniel Leger and Andrea Wedner each suffered gunshot
4 wounds and survived; and

5 WHEREAS, Due to the courageous response by law enforcement,
6 first responders and local medical professionals, lives were
7 saved; and

8 WHEREAS, Officers Daniel Mead, Michael Smidga, Anthony Burke,
9 Timothy Matson, John Persin and Tyler Pashel were injured as
10 they attempted to stop the shooter; and

11 WHEREAS, The Jewish Community Center immediately made itself
12 the central contact point for families of victims and others
13 affected by the attack, creating a comfortable place for
14 devastated community members to access information and services
15 amidst the confusion; and

16 WHEREAS, Jewish Family and Community Services marshalled
17 mental health resources to provide the entire community with
18 counseling services, making therapists available for individuals
19 and dispatching mental health professionals to schools, medical
20 facilities, senior centers and more; and

21 WHEREAS, Just hours after the attack, thousands of
22 Pennsylvanians converged on the streets of Squirrel Hill and
23 individuals and groups across the world responded to this
24 tragedy to pray, mourn, demonstrate and support those in need;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, The American Jewish Committee responded to the
27 attack by asking Jews and non-Jews to "Show up for Shabbat," and
28 synagogues throughout the world welcomed in strangers of all
29 faiths to share their heartbreak and show solidarity against
30 anti-Semitism; and

1 WHEREAS, The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, the broader Muslim
2 community and so many diverse communities throughout the region
3 reached out with compassion and wholehearted support in a way
4 that showed the world that acts of violence will only serve to
5 further unite faithful people across religions and traditions;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In the painful aftermath of the attack, the singular
8 phrase that arose from the heartbroken city of Pittsburgh became
9 "Stronger Than Hate"; and

10 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the first responders,
11 rabbis, staff, lay leadership and hundreds of members of these
12 synagogues who helped their family and friends; and

13 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the doctors, nurses and
14 countless medical professionals who treated the injured; and

15 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the rabbis and
16 volunteers of the two Chevrah Kadisha, or burial societies, that
17 sanctified the dead; and

18 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the Jewish Federation of
19 Greater Pittsburgh, Jewish Community Center of Greater
20 Pittsburgh and Jewish Family and Community Services of
21 Pittsburgh and the countless volunteers and donors of every
22 faith and background in Squirrel Hill and around the world;
23 therefore be it

24 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly designate April 10, 2019,
25 as "Stronger Than Hate Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly honor the 11
27 Pennsylvanians who lost their lives and made significant
28 contributions to their communities; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly recognize the wounded,
30 the survivors and the family and friends who have personally and

1 intensely felt the senseless tragedy of these few minutes of
2 mass violence; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly stand against the violent
4 hatred shown toward fellow Pennsylvanians and others on the
5 basis of religion or targeted at those who seek to pray
6 peacefully in the house of worship of their choice; and be it
7 further

8 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
9 the congregations of Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, New Light and Dor
10 Hadash and the families of Joyce Fienberg, Dr. Richard
11 Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil and David
12 Rosenthal, Bernice and Sylvan Simon, Dan Stein, Melvin Wax and
13 Irving Younger.