
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 318 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY DAVIDSON, ADOLPH, HANNA, SONNEY, P. DALEY, VEREB, SAMUELSON, MILLARD, YOUNGBLOOD, KILLION, ROZZI, HELM, MILNE, READSHAW, HENNESSEY, CALTAGIRONE, PICKETT, DONATUCCI, MCGEEHAN, MIRABITO, V. BROWN, PASHINSKI, MURT, PAINTER, O'BRIEN, RAPP, DIGIROLAMO, LUCAS, KINSEY, SANTARSIERO, ROSS, HAHN, WHITE, NEILSON, GINGRICH, KORTZ, BISHOP, THOMAS, SWANGER, MAHONEY, KIRKLAND, VITALI, COHEN, FRANKEL, ROCK, BENNINGHOFF, SCHLOSSBERG, MICOZZIE, SCAVELLO, SACCONI, MALONEY, EVERETT, STURLA, O'NEILL, FREEMAN, ELLIS AND STEVENSON, MAY 13, 2013

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
MAY 13, 2013

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the life and expressing condolences upon the passing of
2 Robert W. Edgar, former Pennsylvania Congressman and
3 President of Common Cause who died on April 23, 2013.

4 WHEREAS, Born in Philadelphia on May 29, 1943, Robert W.
5 Edgar grew up in Springfield, Delaware County, received a
6 bachelor of arts degree from Lycoming College, Williamsport and
7 a master's of divinity degree from the Theological School of
8 Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. He also received five
9 honorary doctoral degrees; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar was elected to the House of
11 Representatives of the United States Congress in 1974 to
12 represent the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, which
13 covered parts of Delaware County and Philadelphia; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar's congressional class was elected in the

1 wake of the Watergate scandal and went on to lead sweeping
2 reforms in Congress; and

3 WHEREAS, During his six terms in the United States House of
4 Representatives, Mr. Edgar led efforts to improve public
5 transportation, fought wasteful water projects and authored the
6 Community Right to Know provision of Super Fund legislation,
7 among other things; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar served on the House Select Committee on
9 Assassinations that investigated the deaths of Dr. Martin Luther
10 King, Jr., and President John F. Kennedy. He also served on the
11 Veterans Affairs Committee, working on readjustment counseling
12 to treat posttraumatic stress disorder and treatment for Agent
13 Orange; and

14 WHEREAS, In recent years he worked with the Ford Foundation
15 to help the civilians in Vietnam affected by Agent Orange,
16 especially the multitudes of children with genetic defects who
17 have been abandoned and essentially warehoused in makeshift
18 orphanages; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar sat on the boards of several
20 organizations, including the National Coalition on Health Care,
21 the Environment and Energy Study Institute, the National
22 Foundation on Alternative Medicine, Drew University and the
23 National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy; and

24 WHEREAS, In May 2007, he became the president and CEO of
25 Common Cause, one of the nation's most effective grassroots
26 advocacy organizations working to restore the core values of
27 American democracy, with nearly 400,000 members and supporters,
28 a strong presence on Capitol Hill and state chapters in 36
29 states; and

30 WHEREAS, During his tenure, Mr. Edgar oversaw the relaunch of

1 at least seven state chapters, traveled tirelessly to meet with
2 and recruit Common Cause supporters and raised the
3 organization's national profile and its critical mission of
4 accountable government that works for the public interest and
5 empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar worked to limit the influence of big money
7 in politics and for more transparency in government. He called
8 for a constitutional amendment to stop the flood of corporate
9 and super PAC money in the wake of the Citizens United Supreme
10 Court decision of 2010; and

11 WHEREAS, Prior to assuming the leadership of Common Cause, he
12 served seven years as secretary-general of the National Council
13 of the Churches of Christ in the USA, the leading United States
14 organization in the movement for Christian unity that advocates
15 for progressive social policies and has particular focus on
16 eliminating poverty and, before that, as president of the
17 Claremont School of Theology, where he served for ten years. He
18 was also a part-time chaplain at the Federal penitentiary in
19 Lewisburg; and

20 WHEREAS, His wide-ranging career has also included pastorates
21 at United Methodist congregations and stints as a teacher,
22 college chaplain, community organizer and director of a "think
23 tank" on national security issues; and

24 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar was the author of "Middle Church," a call
25 to progressive people of faith to take back the moral high
26 ground from the extremists and make America a better and less
27 divided country; and

28 WHEREAS, As a minister at Drexel, Mr. Edgar founded the
29 People's Emergency Center, a nonprofit social services agency
30 for homeless families, a food kitchen and a center to help

1 people find jobs; and

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Edgar is survived by his wife of 48 years,
3 Merle, and their sons, Andrew, David and Rob and their families;
4 therefore be it

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the life
6 and express condolences upon the death of Robert W. Edgar, who
7 will be remembered as a great hero of Pennsylvania liberals and
8 admired for his deep commitment to social justice and
9 strengthening our democracy; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
11 the family of Robert W. Edgar and to Common Cause.