

House Resolution 785

By: Representatives Benton of the 31st, Cheokas of the 138th, Greene of the 151st, Jasperse of the 11th, Allison of the 8th, and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing November 10, 2015, as Captain Henry Wirz Day; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the year 2015 is the sesquicentennial of the end of the devastating War Between
3 the States; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Captain Henry Wirz was the Commandant of the prison camp known as
5 Andersonville in Sumter County, Georgia, at the end of the war, which was surrendered to
6 federal control in early May, 1865; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, with the concurrence of the Lincoln
8 administration, chose to discontinue the practice of prisoner exchanges and ignore the
9 established customs of warfare for the humane treatment of prisoners of war; and
- 10 WHEREAS, in response to the capture of prisoners by combatants on both sides of the
11 conflict and the exponentially consequential overpopulation of prisoners in Northern and
12 Southern POW camps, Captain Wirz made extraordinarily compassionate efforts to alleviate
13 the suffering of the occupants confined in the Andersonville POW camp; and
- 14 WHEREAS, the recalcitrant Lincoln administration chose to ignore the appeals for mercy
15 and compassion proffered by Captain Wirz on behalf of those in his charge, thereby causing
16 interminable suffering of Union prisoners; and
- 17 WHEREAS, he was subsequently held responsible for conditions beyond his control at the
18 Andersonville camp, unjustly accused of personal acts of atrocity, and was subjected to an
19 unjustifiable trial by the United States military against all principles of proper military justice
20 and reasonable accountability; and

21 WHEREAS, the show trial of Captain Wirz was fraught with irregularities and injustices so
22 as to use him as an example and scapegoat and cast shame on the government of the United
23 States and its military courts; and

24 WHEREAS, Captain Henry Wirz was executed in a barbaric manner before the public,
25 through cruel hanging and death by asphyxiation; his body was desecrated by being
26 autopsied and parts were put on gruesome display, and his body was not returned to his
27 family for proper burial; and

28 WHEREAS, the United States government perpetrates this outrage by continuing to deny its
29 shameful acquiescence in these acts and refusing to apologize and restore the honor of this
30 man.

31 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
32 the members of this body recognize November 10, 2015, as Captain Henry Wirz Day,
33 recognize Captain Henry Wirz as an example of military scapegoating, and honor the
34 memory of Captain Henry Wirz with such solemnity and honorifics in Albany,
35 Andersonville, and elsewhere throughout this state as are customary and appropriate.

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
37 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
38 public and the press.