

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 143 Session of  
2025

INTRODUCED BY D. MILLER, McCLINTON, PIELLI, HILL-EVANS, VENKAT,  
GIRAL, MADDEN, HOHENSTEIN, VITALI, SANCHEZ, KAZEEM,  
SCHLOSSBERG, KENYATTA, DOUGHERTY, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, RIVERA,  
SCOTT AND D. WILLIAMS, MARCH 24, 2025

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, MARCH 26, 2025

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing March 18, 2025, as "Public Defender Day" in  
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, March 18, 2025, marks the 62nd anniversary of the  
4 United States Supreme Court decision in Gideon v. Wainwright;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The Court unanimously ruled that the Sixth Amendment  
7 to the Constitution of the United States guarantees the right to  
8 legal counsel as a fundamental right essential to a fair trial,  
9 and counsel must be provided to individuals who cannot afford to  
10 hire an attorney themselves; and

11 WHEREAS, The ruling spurred nationwide efforts to recruit and  
12 train legal defense attorneys for the purpose of providing a  
13 public defense; and

14 WHEREAS, These efforts were built on Clara Shortridge Foltz's  
15 legacy, who first presented her vision for public defense in  
16 1893; and

1 WHEREAS, Public defenders fight to protect the liberty of  
2 those at their most desperate, vulnerable moments; and

3 WHEREAS, Without zealous advocates, we cannot ensure that  
4 people's rights are protected and that the innocent will not go  
5 to prison; and

6 WHEREAS, In order to best serve this purpose, public  
7 defenders must be recognized as an indispensable component of  
8 the adversarial system and have access to the same resources as  
9 the prosecution; and

10 ~~WHEREAS, The lack of resources strains even the best~~ <--  
11 ~~attorneys and negatively impacts the quality of a legal defense,~~  
12 ~~jeopardizing the integrity of the criminal legal system; and~~

13 ~~WHEREAS, Pennsylvania ranks 45th in indigent defense funding,~~  
14 ~~with per capita spending far below the national average; and~~

15 ~~WHEREAS, Additional State funding is necessary to alleviate~~  
16 ~~the strain placed on public defenders and ensure that we uphold~~  
17 ~~Pennsylvania's Sixth Amendment protections; and~~

18 WHEREAS, Despite ongoing challenges, public defenders  
19 continue to show up and give their all to their clients;  
20 therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize March  
22 18, 2025, as "Public Defender Day" in Pennsylvania and honor the  
23 hard and selfless work of public defenders across this  
24 Commonwealth.