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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 151 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY SAMUELSON, HENNESSEY, MARSICO, ACOSTA,  
BENNINGHOFF, BISHOP, BOBACK, V. BROWN, BROWNLEE, CALTAGIRONE,  
COHEN, D. COSTA, SCHLEGEL CULVER, DAVIS, DeLISSIO,  
DiGIROLAMO, ENGLISH, FABRIZIO, FARINA, FREEMAN, GIBBONS,  
GILLEN, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRELL, HARHART, KIM, KINSEY,  
KIRKLAND, KORTZ, MAJOR, McCARTER, McNEILL, MENTZER, MILLARD,  
O'NEILL, PICKETT, READSHAW, REGAN, ROZZI, SCHLOSSBERG,  
SCHWEYER, STAATS, TAYLOR, THOMAS, VEREB, WATSON, WHEELAND AND  
DONATUCCI, MARCH 6, 2015

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MARCH 6, 2015

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A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring Ronald W. Costen, Ph.D., Esquire, on his retirement  
2 from Temple University and recognizing his work as the  
3 director of the Institute on Protective Services.

4 WHEREAS, In 1999, Temple University's College of Health  
5 Professionals and Social Work established the Institute on  
6 Protective Services (the Institute) to conduct training of law  
7 enforcement agencies and district attorneys on elder abuse  
8 issues; and

9 WHEREAS, Since 2000, the Institute has been a collaboration  
10 between the Department of Aging and Temple University to provide  
11 training and investigative consultation to agencies and law  
12 enforcement officials examining cases of physical abuse and  
13 financial exploitation of elderly and disabled persons; and

14 WHEREAS, Ronald W. Costen, Ph.D., Esquire, has served as

1 director of the Institute since 2000, providing his expertise to  
2 the Commonwealth's 52 area agencies on aging, district attorneys  
3 and law enforcement; and

4 WHEREAS, Since 2011, Dr. Costen and his staff have helped to  
5 recover more than \$2.3 million in funds exploited from senior  
6 citizens and protect an additional \$5.2 million in at-risk  
7 assets and have assisted in 21 arrests resulting in 12  
8 successful elder financial abuse proceedings; and

9 WHEREAS, Ten years ago, Dr. Costen and his staff established  
10 the first Elder Abuse Task Force in Pennsylvania to improve  
11 communications between district attorneys and area agencies on  
12 aging investigating elder abuse; and

13 WHEREAS, There are now 33 elder abuse task forces across this  
14 Commonwealth; and

15 WHEREAS, Since the initial concept of an elder abuse task  
16 force, the Institute's role has expanded to educate district  
17 attorneys, police departments, coroners and emergency medical  
18 service personnel to recognize signs of elder abuse; and

19 WHEREAS, Since 1997, Dr. Costen has worked as a forensic  
20 associate, providing legal, educational and program development  
21 services to health care providers serving elderly and  
22 developmentally disabled persons; and

23 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen provided legal, advocacy and life  
24 management services to individuals with disabilities and their  
25 families, supplied treatment record review and testimony  
26 regarding neglect and abuse of individuals in long-term care  
27 settings and consulted with district attorneys, police and  
28 coroners in criminal cases involving neglect and abuse of older  
29 adults and people with disabilities; and

30 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen received his bachelor of arts degree from

1 Old Dominion University, Sociology Department, Norfolk,  
2 Virginia, in 1969, his master of arts degree from Duquesne  
3 University, Sociology Department in 1970, his doctor of  
4 philosophy degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of  
5 Social Work in 1975 and his juris doctor degree from Temple  
6 University School of Law in 1987; and

7 WHEREAS, From 1971 to 1989, Dr. Costen held various positions  
8 to help protect our most vulnerable citizens, including  
9 assistant district attorney for Lackawanna County, educational  
10 program specialist with the Council on Social Work Education,  
11 Alexandria, Virginia, research associate at the University of  
12 Pittsburgh School of Social Work and program director for  
13 Allegheny County Mental Health/Mental Retardation in Pittsburgh;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, From 1976 to 1989, Dr. Costen served as assistant  
16 dean, assistant professor and chairperson of the Gerontology  
17 Institute at Marywood University, Scranton, teaching graduate  
18 courses in social policy, aging, human behavior and health care;  
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen planned, developed and implemented  
21 Marywood University's Gerontology Institute, off-campus and  
22 weekend graduate social work programs and the Rural Aging Mental  
23 Health Training Project; and

24 WHEREAS, From 1989 to 1997, Dr. Costen served as Deputy  
25 Attorney General in the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General,  
26 Criminal Law Division, investigating and prosecuting cases of  
27 abuse and neglect of children and elderly and developmentally  
28 disabled persons; and

29 WHEREAS, As Deputy Attorney General, Dr. Costen operated the  
30 Pennsylvania Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Child Abuse,

1 directed the Pennsylvania Elder Abuse Statewide Law Enforcement  
2 Training Project and the Pennsylvania Interdisciplinary Child  
3 Abuse Investigation Training Project and served as legislative  
4 counsel for elder abuse and neglect issues; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen holds several professional licenses and  
6 memberships; and

7 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen is admitted to practice before the  
8 Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and is a licensed social worker;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen's memberships include the Pennsylvania  
11 Bar Association, Pennsylvania Board of Social Work Examiners and  
12 National Association of Social Workers; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen retired from Temple University on January  
14 1, 2015, to pursue a master of divinity degree from the Lutheran  
15 Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. Costen will continue to provide his professional  
17 expertise to elder abuse task forces, area agencies on aging and  
18 local law enforcement fighting elder abuse; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor Ronald W.  
20 Costen, Ph.D., Esquire, for his decades of service to our most  
21 vulnerable citizens and recognize the work of Dr. Costen and his  
22 staff in fighting physical and financial abuse of elderly and  
23 disabled persons.