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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 192 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY BAKER, CUTLER, TOOIL, HENNESSEY, DIGIROLAMO,  
READSHAW, CALTAGIRONE, KNOWLES, SAINATO, MILLARD, DUSH,  
SONNEY, PICKETT, RYAN, SANKEY, NEILSON, BIZZARRO, MCGINNIS,  
QUIGLEY, GROVE, KAUFFMAN, STAATS, MARSICO, B. MILLER AND  
HELM, MARCH 28, 2017

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MARCH 28, 2017

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of May 1 through 7, 2017, as "American  
2 Religious History Week" in Pennsylvania to recognize the  
3 impact of religious beliefs on America's history.

4 WHEREAS, Religious faith was not only important in official  
5 American life during the periods of discovery, exploration,  
6 colonization and growth, but has also been acknowledged and  
7 incorporated into all three branches of American Federal  
8 Government from their very beginning; and

9 WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States affirmed this  
10 self-evident fact in a unanimous ruling declaring "This is a  
11 religious people ... From the discovery of this continent to the  
12 present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation";  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, The first act of America's first Congress in 1774  
15 was to ask a minister to open with prayer and to lead Congress  
16 in the reading of four chapters of the Bible; and

1       WHEREAS, The Liberty Bell was named for the Biblical  
2 inscription from Leviticus 25:10, which passage of scripture is  
3 emblazoned around it: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land, to  
4 all the inhabitants thereof"; and

5       WHEREAS, In 1782, Congress pursued a plan to print a Bible  
6 that would be "a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use  
7 of schools" and therefore approved the production of the first  
8 English language Bible printed in America that contained the  
9 congressional endorsement that "the United States in Congress  
10 assembled ... recommend this edition of the Bible to the  
11 inhabitants of the United States"; and

12       WHEREAS, In 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in  
13 Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin declared, "God governs in the  
14 affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground  
15 without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise  
16 without His aid? ... Without His concurring aid, we shall  
17 succeed in this political building no better than the builders  
18 of Babel"; and

19       WHEREAS, In 1853, the United States Senate declared that the  
20 Founding Fathers "had no fear or jealousy of religion itself,  
21 nor did they wish to see us an irreligious people ... they did  
22 not intend to spread over all the public authorities and the  
23 whole public action of the nation the dead and revolting  
24 spectacle of atheistical apathy"; and

25       WHEREAS, Beginning in 1904 and continuing for the next half-  
26 century, the Federal Government printed and distributed *The Life*  
27 *and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* for the use of Members of  
28 Congress because of the important teachings it contained; and

29       WHEREAS, The constitutions of each of the 50 states, either  
30 in the preamble or body, explicitly recognize or express

1 gratitude to God; and

2 WHEREAS, President Andrew Jackson declared that the Bible "is  
3 the rock on which our Republic rests"; and

4 WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln declared that the Bible  
5 "is the best gift God has given to men ... But for it, we could  
6 not know right from wrong"; and

7 WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt not only led the  
8 nation in a six-minute prayer during D-Day on June 6, 1944, but  
9 he also declared that "If we will not prepare to give all that  
10 we have and all that we are to preserve Christian civilization  
11 in our land, we shall go to destruction"; and

12 WHEREAS, President John F. Kennedy declared that "The rights  
13 of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the  
14 hand of God"; and

15 WHEREAS, Every other President has similarly recognized the  
16 role of God and religious faith in the public life of America;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, All sessions of the United States Supreme Court  
19 begin with the Court's Marshal announcing, "God save the United  
20 States and this honorable court"; and

21 WHEREAS, Justice John Jay, an author of *The Federalist Papers*  
22 and original Justice of the United States Supreme Court, urged  
23 "The most effectual means of securing the continuance of our  
24 civil and religious liberties is always to remember with  
25 reverence and gratitude the Source from which they flow"; and

26 WHEREAS, Numerous others of the most important American  
27 government leaders, institutions, monuments, buildings and  
28 landmarks both openly acknowledge and incorporate religious  
29 words, symbols and imagery into official venues; therefore be it

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the

1 week of May 1 through 7, 2017, as "American Religious History  
2 Week" in Pennsylvania to recognize the impact of religious  
3 beliefs on America's history; and be it further

4       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives affirm the rich  
5 spiritual and diverse religious history of our nation from its  
6 founding to the current day; and be it further

7       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives reject, in the  
8 strongest possible terms, any effort to remove, obscure or  
9 purposely omit such history from our nation's public buildings  
10 and educational resources.