

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 223 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY McCARTER, SCHLEGEL CULVER, GRELL, MILLARD, LONGIETTI, KNOWLES, HENNESSEY, SCHWEYER, KINSEY, DiGIROLAMO, VITALI, CALTAGIRONE, W. KELLER, KIM, VEREB, BROWNLEE, MARSHALL, V. BROWN, MASSER, SCHREIBER, DUSH, SONNEY, WHEATLEY, THOMAS, McNEILL, ROSS, GODSHALL, P. DALEY, PAYNE, ELLIS, READSHAW, GOODMAN, FARINA, COHEN, D. COSTA, MAHONEY, DeLUCA, MAJOR, GINGRICH, GIBBONS AND MURT, APRIL 10, 2015

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, APRIL 10, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring former legislator Franklin L. Kury for his years of  
 2 public service to the residents of this Commonwealth and his  
 3 prime role in drafting the language of Article I, Section 27  
 4 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania, also known as the  
 5 Environmental Rights Amendment.

6 WHEREAS, Franklin Leo Kury was born October 15, 1936, in  
 7 Sunbury, the son of Barney and Helen Kury; and

8 WHEREAS, After graduating from Sunbury High School in 1954,  
 9 Mr. Kury continued his education, graduating from Trinity  
 10 College in Connecticut in 1958 and the University of  
 11 Pennsylvania Law School in Philadelphia in 1961; and

12 WHEREAS, Like his father, Mr. Kury was interested in  
 13 politics, and after graduating from law school, he worked for  
 14 State Attorney General David Stahl and United States  
 15 Representative George Rhodes before enlisting in the United  
 16 States Army; and

1       WHEREAS, After returning from the Army and marrying his wife,  
2 Elizabeth, Mr. Kury worked for conservation leader Basse Beck;  
3 and

4       WHEREAS, Both Mr. Kury and Mr. Beck cared deeply for the  
5 Susquehanna River and advocated for stronger environmental laws  
6 to prevent fish kills and protect aquatic life; and

7       WHEREAS, Mr. Kury's desire to do more for the environment  
8 helped influence his decision to run for the office of State  
9 Representative in 1966; and

10       WHEREAS, Being a strong advocate for both the environment and  
11 government reform, Mr. Kury's campaign platform, "For Clean  
12 Streams and Clean Politics," described the type of legislator he  
13 would be in Harrisburg; and

14       WHEREAS, After a hard-fought race, Mr. Kury was the victor,  
15 and he immediately began his work in Harrisburg; and

16       WHEREAS, Throughout his legislative career, which spanned  
17 three terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and two  
18 terms in the Pennsylvania Senate before his voluntary retirement  
19 from the General Assembly, Mr. Kury had a role in the passage of  
20 several key pieces of legislation; and

21       WHEREAS, Knowing that the environmental tide ebbs and flows,  
22 Mr. Kury realized that much of the legislation passed could  
23 easily be repealed later, but, a constitutional amendment would  
24 be much more difficult to change; and

25       WHEREAS, Through his tireless efforts, Mr. Kury was able to  
26 get the Environmental Rights Amendment legislation unanimously  
27 passed through two successive legislative sessions; and

28       WHEREAS, When the Environmental Rights Amendment was brought  
29 up for a public referendum vote, it passed overwhelmingly by a  
30 margin of 4-1; and

1       WHEREAS, Upon the addition of Article I, Section 27 on May  
2 18, 1971, Pennsylvanians were granted the right to clean water  
3 and air just as much as other constitutional rights, such as  
4 free speech and freedom of religion; and

5       WHEREAS, The Environmental Rights Amendment reads:

6           The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to  
7           the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and  
8           esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public  
9           natural resources are the common property of all the  
10          people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of  
11          these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and  
12          maintain them for the benefit of all the people;

13 and

14       WHEREAS, Of the environmental legislation passed while he was  
15 in the General Assembly, Mr. Kury considers his greatest  
16 legislative achievement to be his prime role in drafting the  
17 language of Article I, Section 27 of the Constitution of  
18 Pennsylvania, also known as the Environmental Rights Amendment;

19 and

20       WHEREAS, Although Mr. Kury did not seek reelection to the  
21 Senate in 1980, he remains active in State-related issues; and

22       WHEREAS, Throughout his life and career, Mr. Kury has  
23 believed in public service; and

24       WHEREAS, In a 2006 interview, Mr. Kury advised new members of  
25 the General Assembly to "remember who sent you"; therefore be it

26       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor former  
27 legislator Franklin L. Kury for his years of public service to  
28 the residents of this Commonwealth and his prime role in  
29 drafting the language of the Environmental Rights Amendment; and  
30 be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the  
2 importance of the basic rights of clean air and pure water as  
3 described in the Environmental Rights Amendment.