
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 410 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY MIRANDA, JULY 15, 2013

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
JULY 15, 2013

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan for his many outstanding
2 accomplishments and contributions to society.

3 WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan was born October 16,
4 1922, in a dirt alley known as Washington Court in Charleston,
5 West Virginia; and

6 WHEREAS, A race-related incident inspired his lifetime
7 pursuit of fighting racial prejudice; and

8 WHEREAS, He was an outstanding basketball player and football
9 player and by the time he reached Garnet High School, there was
10 talk of him playing professional basketball; and

11 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan won an athletic scholarship to the
12 then all-black West Virginia State College, but after an injury,
13 he lost his scholarship and his athletic dreams were quickly
14 replaced by another calling; and

15 WHEREAS, Giving up his education was not an option, so
16 Reverend Sullivan worked days at the Naval Ordnance Plant and
17 attended classes at night to pay tuition, while on Sundays, he
18 preached at First Baptist Church in Montgomery, West Virginia,

1 and another church in Vandalia, West Virginia; and

2 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan once said "I knew there was a
3 purpose early on. Early on I would write poetry about the
4 advancement of blacks and that sort of thing"; and

5 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan became a leader in school and at
6 church, developing an interest in social issues and speaking to
7 fellow students about civil rights; and

8 WHEREAS, He was elected governor at Negro Boys State Camp, a
9 program sponsored by the American Legion that taught African-
10 American high school students about American government; and

11 WHEREAS, After graduating in 1943, Reverend Sullivan moved to
12 Harlem, New York, where he studied under Adam Clayton Powell and
13 also where, on a blind date, he met his future wife, Grace, whom
14 he called "Amazing Grace"; and

15 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan took his first active role in the
16 civil rights movement by helping to organize a march on
17 Washington, DC in the early 1940s; and

18 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan became pastor of Zion Baptist
19 Church in urban Philadelphia in 1950, eventually increasing its
20 membership from 600 to 6,000, making it one of the largest
21 congregations in America; and

22 WHEREAS, In the early 1960s, Reverend Sullivan organized a
23 boycott of all Philadelphia companies that would not hire
24 blacks, using the slogan: "Don't buy where you don't work"; and

25 WHEREAS, *Life* magazine named him one of the nation's 100
26 leading citizens in 1963, and in 1965 he was named West
27 Virginian of the Year by the *Sunday Gazette-Mail* of Charleston;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, The boycotts succeeded and jobs were eventually
30 offered to people of all races, but many did not have the

1 necessary skills required for the openings; and

2 WHEREAS, For this reason, in 1964, Reverend Sullivan founded
3 Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC), a self-help
4 training program that has grown to 76 centers in the United
5 States and 33 centers in 18 other countries, training more than
6 two million people worldwide; and

7 WHEREAS, To date, about 1.5 million people of all races have
8 been trained in 142 centers worldwide; and

9 WHEREAS, The boycotts and the OIC thrust Reverend Sullivan
10 into the spotlight for the first time and he soon became the
11 envy of other young civil rights activists, including the
12 Reverends Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

13 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan's work was recognized nationally
14 and he was asked by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to organize
15 boycotts in Atlanta in the early 1960s; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1971, Reverend Sullivan joined the General Motors
17 Corporation Board of Directors and became the first African
18 American appointed to the Board of Directors of a Fortune 500
19 company; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1977, Reverend Sullivan developed a code of
21 conduct for companies operating in South Africa and these
22 "Sullivan Principles" created a revolution in industrial race
23 relations and were instrumental in dismantling apartheid; and

24 WHEREAS, He convinced the General Motors Corporation and 11
25 other corporations to pull out of South Africa until apartheid
26 ended; and

27 WHEREAS, For his outstanding contributions to society,
28 Reverend Sullivan was bestowed many honors; and

29 WHEREAS, In 1992, Reverend Sullivan was awarded the
30 Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given

1 in the United States, by President George H. W. Bush, honoring
2 him for his "voice of reason for over forty years" and a
3 lifetime of work in helping the economically and socially
4 disadvantaged people in the world; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1999, the "Global Sullivan Principles" were
6 issued at the United Nations and this expanded code called for
7 multinational companies to take an active role in the
8 advancement of human rights and social justice; and

9 WHEREAS, In November 1999, he received the prestigious Notre
10 Dame Award which is conferred "annually on a person who has
11 achieved international recognition for the contribution to the
12 welfare of humanity," and in December 1999, he received the
13 Eleanor Roosevelt Award from President Bill Clinton who
14 recognized Sullivan's humanitarian efforts around the world; and

15 WHEREAS, He also founded International Foundation for
16 Education and Self-Help (IFESH), which is funded by the United
17 States Agency for International Development and promotes
18 democracy around the world; and

19 WHEREAS, The life of this exceptional man was viewed by the
20 country when a documentary detailing his roots and
21 accomplishments aired on PBS in January 2001, entitled "A
22 Principled Man: Rev. Leon Sullivan."; and

23 WHEREAS, Reverend Leon H. Sullivan died at 78 years of age on
24 April 24, 2001, of leukemia at a Scottsdale, Arizona, hospital;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan's daughter, Hope, is director of
27 government relations for OIC and helped her father plan the
28 annual African-American Summit, a meeting of world leaders who
29 discuss improving the continent; and

30 WHEREAS, The Leon H. Sullivan Summits, whose mission was

1 inspired by Reverend Sullivan's belief that the development of
2 Africa is a matter of global partnerships, bring together the
3 world's political and business leaders, delegates representing
4 national and international civil and multinational organizations
5 and members of academic institutions in order to focus attention
6 and resources on Africa's economic and social development; and

7 WHEREAS, Creative and innovative initiatives emerge out of
8 discussions and negotiations at the summits, and new
9 relationships are brokered in order to make those initiatives a
10 reality; and

11 WHEREAS, The Sullivan Summits are organized by the Leon H.
12 Sullivan Foundation to highlight key issues and best practices,
13 stimulate discussion and define opportunities, promote private
14 enterprise and foster high-level strategic partnerships, as well
15 as provide a bridge between America and Africa, serving as a
16 forum for economic and cultural cooperation; and

17 WHEREAS, Inspired by the life and principles of Reverend
18 Sullivan, the Sullivan Foundation exists to promote and
19 celebrate the political, entrepreneurial and intellectual
20 leadership of the African Diaspora and friends of Africa, and to
21 advocate on behalf of Africa and the world's most vulnerable
22 people; and

23 WHEREAS, The Sullivan Foundation's work has evolved into five
24 main operations, including the Leon H. Sullivan Summits, Global
25 Sullivan Principles, Government and Public Advocacy, Leverage
26 Magazine and events such as dinners, forums and town hall
27 meetings; and

28 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan devoted his life to helping others
29 help themselves; and

30 WHEREAS, From Appalachia to South Africa, Reverend Sullivan

1 maintained his identity and his ideals while he created an
2 international revolution in race relations; and

3 WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan was given 50 honorary degrees from
4 various colleges and universities, and filled the roles of
5 author, organizer, builder, pastor, teacher and activist, among
6 many other roles; and

7 WHEREAS, On Saturday, August 3, 2013, the 21st Annual Leon H.
8 Sullivan Golf Tournament will be held at Green Valley Country
9 Club, the proceeds of which will benefit the Zion Community
10 Center of North Philadelphia; therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor Reverend
12 Dr. Leon H. Sullivan for his many outstanding accomplishments
13 and contributions to society.