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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 339 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, TEPLITZ, DINNIMAN, SCAVELLO, FONTANA,  
COSTA, RAFFERTY, MCILHINNEY, VULAKOVICH, MENSCH AND AUMENT,  
APRIL 12, 2016

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, APRIL 12, 2016

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating May 1, 2016, as "The Battle of the Crooked Billet  
2 Day" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, During the American War for Independence at the time  
4 of the Valley Forge Encampment in 1777 and 1778, President  
5 Thomas Wharton of the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council  
6 commissioned Brigadier General John Lacey, the youngest general  
7 in American history and a native of Bucks County, to lead the  
8 Pennsylvania militia in patrolling the countryside outside  
9 Philadelphia; and

10 WHEREAS, General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the  
11 Continental Army, charged General Lacey with the mission to keep  
12 the local inhabitants from selling supplies to the British Army,  
13 who occupied Philadelphia, and to reroute those supplies to the  
14 Continental Army at Valley Forge; and

15 WHEREAS, Due to the success of the Pennsylvania militia, the  
16 British Army developed a plan to annihilate the Pennsylvania  
17 militia by ambush and planned to capture General Lacey; and

1       WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania militia was comprised of  
2 approximately 300 men from Bucks County and historic Cumberland  
3 County, as well as from other places throughout this  
4 Commonwealth; and

5       WHEREAS, The British Army attacked the Pennsylvania militia  
6 with a force of approximately 850 men in the early morning of  
7 May 1, 1778, in the present-day Borough of Hatboro, Montgomery  
8 County, and the present-day Township of Warminster, Bucks  
9 County; and

10       WHEREAS, The Queen's Rangers attempted to push the  
11 Pennsylvania militia south toward the point of ambush along  
12 present-day Horsham Road; and

13       WHEREAS, General Lacey was not fooled by the trap and led the  
14 Pennsylvania militia north where they fought their way through a  
15 blockade held by British Dragoons, thereby escaping deeper into  
16 Bucks County; and

17       WHEREAS, Twenty-six Pennsylvania militiamen were killed in  
18 action that day and 58 Pennsylvania militiamen were captured and  
19 the Pennsylvania militia lost all of their supply wagons; and

20       WHEREAS, General Lacey's heroic leadership and quick thinking  
21 on that fateful day prevented further casualties, saving the  
22 lives of hundreds of Pennsylvania militiamen; and

23       WHEREAS, Forty-eight hours after the battle, later referred  
24 to as the Battle of the Crooked Billet, General Lacey continued  
25 with his orders of keeping supplies from occupied Philadelphia  
26 and redirecting supplies to Valley Forge; and

27       WHEREAS, General Lacey continued to serve the people of  
28 Pennsylvania when, in November of 1778, he was elected to the  
29 Pennsylvania General Assembly and, in November 1779, he was  
30 elected to the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council; therefore

1 be it

2       RESOLVED, That the Senate designate May 1, 2016, as "The  
3 Battle of the Crooked Billet Day" throughout this Commonwealth  
4 to honor the men of the Pennsylvania militia, under the command  
5 and leadership of Brigadier General John Lacey, for their  
6 heroism, especially those men who paid the ultimate sacrifice on  
7 May 1, 1778, for the competent and heroic leadership of  
8 Brigadier General John Lacey in preserving the militia from  
9 annihilation and leading them to safety and for all their sacred  
10 participation in the fight and struggle for freedom in the early  
11 years of the Republic of the United States of America.