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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 68 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY HAYWOOD, FONTANA, BROWNE, ROBINSON AND VOGEL,  
APRIL 9, 2021

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REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, APRIL 9, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing April 9, 2021, as "Appomattox Day" in Pennsylvania,  
2 in honor of the historic Confederate surrender in Appomattox,  
3 Virginia, which led to full emancipation in the United States  
4 and signaled the end of the American Civil War, and urging  
5 the designation of "Appomattox Day" as a legal holiday in  
6 this Commonwealth.

7 WHEREAS, On the morning of April 9, 1865, the Battle of  
8 Appomattox Court House came to an end after Confederate General  
9 Robert E. Lee found that the last route of retreat was blocked  
10 by several of seven regiments of the United States Colored  
11 Troops (USCT) present at Appomattox that day; and

12 WHEREAS, Confederate General Robert E. Lee is noted as  
13 saying, in defense of the Confederacy, that "There is nothing  
14 left for me to do but to go and see General Grant, and I would  
15 rather die a thousand deaths"; and

16 WHEREAS, On the afternoon of April 9, 1865, Confederate  
17 General Robert E. Lee and Union General Ulysses S. Grant met at  
18 Wilmer McLean's house in Appomattox, Virginia, and agreed on  
19 terms of surrender, thus effectively marking the end of combat  
20 in the American Civil War; and

1       WHEREAS, General Ulysses S. Grant created the terms of  
2       surrender, which allowed 28,000 Confederate soldiers to go home  
3       with pardons; and

4       WHEREAS, The defeat of the Confederacy led to the  
5       reconstruction of those states that rebelled against the end of  
6       enslavement of Africans and African Americans; and

7       WHEREAS, Countless memoirs and oral histories testify that  
8       many slaves first learned of and experienced emancipation at the  
9       moment of the Union's triumph at Appomattox; and

10       WHEREAS, Approximately 4,600 enslaved people were emancipated  
11       in Appomattox County on April 9, 1865, by the surrender; and

12       WHEREAS, One of the accounts of a formerly enslaved person  
13       living in Appomattox was from a woman named Fannie Berry, who  
14       described the community's reaction to the surrender by stating  
15       "[We] began to sing... 'You are free, you are free'... such  
16       rejoicing and shouting, you never heard in your life"; and

17       WHEREAS, The USCT involvement at Appomattox served as a point  
18       of pride and as vindication to other Black soldiers and  
19       civilians, especially those in Southern states; and

20       WHEREAS, African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass  
21       reflected on the surrender during a Decoration Day address in  
22       Arlington, Virginia, and is quoted as saying, "When the dark and  
23       vengeful spirit of slavery, always ambitious, preferring to rule  
24       in hell than to serve in heaven, fired the Southern heart and  
25       stirred all the malign elements of discord, when our great  
26       Republic, the hope of freedom and self-government throughout the  
27       world, had reached the point of supreme peril, when the Union of  
28       these states was torn and rent asunder at the center, and the  
29       armies of a gigantic rebellion came forth with broad blades and  
30       bloody hands to destroy the very foundations of American

1 society, the unknown braves who flung themselves into the  
2 yawning chasm, where cannon roared and bullets whistled, fought  
3 and fell. They died for their country"; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Douglass noted on that day, "We are sometimes  
5 asked, in the name of patriotism, to forget the merits of this  
6 fearful struggle, and to remember with equal admiration those  
7 who struck at the nation's life and those who struck to save it,  
8 those who fought for slavery and those who fought for liberty  
9 and justice"; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Douglass continued, "I am no minister of malice.  
11 I would not strike the fallen. I would not repel the repentant;  
12 but may my right hand forget her cunning and my tongue cleave to  
13 the roof of my mouth, if I forget the difference between the  
14 parties to that terrible, protracted, and bloody conflict"; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Douglass concluded, "We are not here to applaud  
16 manly courage, save as it has been displayed in a noble cause.  
17 We must never forget that victory to the rebellion meant death  
18 to the Republic"; and

19 WHEREAS, The anniversary of the surrender at Appomattox Court  
20 House has been recognized since 1866 and continues today with  
21 the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park hosting  
22 annual anniversary historical and educational events; and

23 WHEREAS, April 9, 2021, will mark the 156th anniversary of  
24 the surrender at Appomattox, Virginia; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize April 9, 2021, as  
26 "Appomattox Day" in Pennsylvania, in honor of the historic  
27 Confederate surrender in Appomattox, Virginia, which led to full  
28 emancipation in the United States and signaled the end of the  
29 American Civil War, and urge the designation of "Appomattox Day"  
30 as a legal holiday in this Commonwealth.