



2013 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 11

May 17, 2013 - Introduced by Representatives RICHARDS and SINICKI. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** commemorating the Bay View labor strike and tragedy and the removal
2 of the portrait of Jeremiah Rusk from the assembly chamber.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This resolution recognizes May 2 as the anniversary of the Bay View labor strike and tragedy and requires the assembly chief clerk to remove the portrait of Jeremiah Rusk from public display in the assembly chamber, including the parlor; galleries; lobbies; hallways; and the offices of the speaker, majority leader, minority leader, and caucus chair, on that day and the following week and to hang in its place a photograph of the iron puddlers of the North Chicago Railroad Rolling Mill in Bay View.

3 Whereas, Wisconsin workers and reformers made historic contributions to the
4 development of workplace rights in the United States, helping to enact reforms such
5 as worker's compensation and unemployment insurance; models that, in turn, were
6 adopted by other states and the federal government and are cornerstones of
7 employment in this state and country today; and

8 Whereas, during the 1880s, workers nationally and in Milwaukee began to
9 advocate for the eight-hour workday, which we now take for granted; and

1 Whereas, until that time workers generally labored at physically punishing
2 jobs for many more hours than eight each day; and

3 Whereas, on May 1, 1886, a national campaign to require all employers to adopt
4 a standard eight-hour day culminated when workers' unions urged all American
5 workers to cease labor until their employers met the demand; and

6 Whereas, in Milwaukee, civil parades and demonstrations followed as striking
7 workers shut down factories without violence during the first days of May 1886; and

8 Whereas, the morning of May 2, 1886, revealed the turmoil among Milwaukee's
9 laborers around this issue, as more than a dozen strikes began in the city, involving
10 the carpenters, coal heavers, sewer diggers, iron moulders, teamsters, common
11 laborers, and other workers; and

12 Whereas, during this period, the good citizens of Milwaukee began to receive
13 word of the bloody conflict in Chicago's Haymarket Square, where police killed
14 workers demonstrating peaceably for their rights; and

15 Whereas, news of the bloodshed at Haymarket Square elevated tensions among
16 the citizenry of Milwaukee, and many of Milwaukee's workers began to fear armed
17 confrontation; and

18 Whereas, the workers at the last grand factory to remain in operation were the
19 iron puddlers at the North Chicago Railroad Rolling Mill Steel Foundry, in Bay View;
20 and

21 Whereas, on May 5, 1886, even as they feared for their safety, a crowd of
22 demonstrators walked peaceably to the North Chicago Railroad Rolling Mill to urge
23 the iron puddlers to participate in the general strike; and

24 Whereas, this peaceable assemblage of striking workers was then fired upon by
25 Wisconsin National Guard troops, under order by Jeremiah Rusk, the governor of the

1 state of Wisconsin, which killed seven people and wounded four, including
2 bystanders; and

3 Whereas, the infamous events of that day will remain in the historic and
4 cultural legacy of Wisconsin, serving as a reminder of the sacrifices our forebears
5 made, even in the face of deadly opposition from Jeremiah Rusk, their own governor,
6 so that we, their descendants, might lead safer, more productive work lives; and

7 Whereas, the citizens of Bay View and Milwaukee commemorate this pivotal
8 series of events annually and recognize May 2 as the anniversary of the Bay View
9 labor strike and tragedy; now, therefore, be it

10 ***Resolved by the assembly, That*** every May 2 each year and on each day in the
11 following week, to commemorate the Bay View tragedy and the sad fact of hostile
12 opposition from Governor Rusk, the assembly chief clerk shall remove the portrait
13 of Governor Rusk from public display in the assembly chambers, including the
14 parlor; galleries; lobbies; hallways; and the offices of the speaker, majority leader,
15 minority leader, and caucus chair, and shall hang instead in its place on those days
16 the historic photographic portrait of the iron puddlers of the North Chicago Railroad
17 Rolling Mill in Bay View that otherwise hangs in the office of the 20th Assembly
18 District.

19

(END)