
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 157 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY COHEN, FREEMAN, HENNESSEY, CLYMER, MILLARD,
READSHAW, PARKER, KIM, CRUZ, CALTAGIRONE, MAHONEY, BISHOP,
STURLA, B. BOYLE, O'BRIEN, SWANGER AND PAINTER,
MARCH 14, 2013

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
MARCH 14, 2013

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the year 2013 as "The Year of Religious Diversity"
2 in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, William Penn, a devout Quaker, offered Pennsylvania
4 as a "Holy Experiment," where all would be free to practice
5 their religion in whatever manner they saw fit; and

6 WHEREAS, William Penn's Declaration of Rights in 1677 assured
7 that "no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or
8 support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry
9 against his consent"; and

10 WHEREAS, In order to assure that government would abstain
11 from favoring one religion over another, William Penn also
12 declared that "no preference shall ever be given by law to any
13 religious establishment or modes of worship"; and

14 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's Benjamin Franklin welcomed all
15 religions, donated funds to the construction of their churches,
16 meeting houses and synagogues and further promoted the

1 construction of an auditorium where all would be welcome to
2 preach, including Muslims; and

3 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is now home to Christians, including
4 many Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant denominations; Quakers;
5 Jews of Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reformed
6 congregations; Mormons; Muslims of Shia, Sunni, Sufi and others;
7 Unitarians; Buddhists; Hindus; Sikhs; Taoists; and other
8 religious traditions, as well as many who claim no religious
9 affiliation and nonbelievers; and

10 WHEREAS, Among the religious traditions practiced in
11 Pennsylvania, there are many sacred or holy texts, such as the
12 books of the Bible, Talmud, Koran, Book of Mormon, Veda,
13 Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, The Four Books and Five Classics of
14 Confucius, Tao-te-ching (The Way and Its Power), Tipitaka and
15 others; and

16 WHEREAS, These revered books impart great wisdom and beauty
17 to believers and are appreciated and respected by nonbelievers
18 as well; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize and
20 celebrate the religious diversity encompassed by Pennsylvania as
21 a fulfillment of the vision of William Penn; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
23 year 2013 as "The Year of Religious Diversity" throughout this
24 Commonwealth and continue to welcome all to Pennsylvania in the
25 spirit of our founder.