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House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

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OTHER APPOINTMENTS:  
PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All House Members

**FROM:** Rep. Mark B. Cohen *MB*

**DATE:** May 30, 2012

**RE:** Co-sponsorship of a Resolution designating the Year 2012 as "The Year of Religious Diversity" in Pennsylvania

Your co-sponsorship is requested of a resolution to designate the Year 2012, as "The Year of Religious Diversity" in Pennsylvania.

This resolution recognizes and celebrates the religious diversity encompassed by Pennsylvania as a fulfillment of the vision of William Penn.

Please contact Linda Huntington in my office to co-sponsor this resolution at [lhunting@pahouse.net](mailto:lhunting@pahouse.net) or at 7-3085.

Attachment

Representative Mark B. Cohen

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35

A RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Year 2012, as "The Year of Religious Diversity" in Pennsylvania.

Whereas William Penn, a devout Quaker, offered Pennsylvania as a "Holy Experiment" where all would be free to practice their religion in whatever manner they saw fit. His Declaration of Rights in 1677 assured that "no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent"; and

Whereas, in order to assure that government would abstain from favoring one religion over another, the Great Penn also declared that "no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishment or modes of worship." and

Whereas, Pennsylvania's favorite son, Benjamin Franklin, welcomed all religions, donated funds to the construction of their churches, meeting houses and synagogues and further promoted the construction of an auditorium where all would be welcome to preach including Muslims.

Whereas, Pennsylvania is now home to Christians including many Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant denominations; Quakers; Jews of Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reformed congregations; Mormons; Muslims of Shia, Sunni, Sufi and others; Unitarians; Buddhists; Hindus; Sikhs; Taoists; and other religious traditions; as well as many who claim no religious affiliation, and non-believers.

Whereas, among the religious traditions practiced in Pennsylvania there are many sacred or holy texts such as the books of the Bible, Talmud, Koran, Book of Mormon, Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, The Four Books and Five Classics of Confucius, Tao-te-ching (The Way and Its Power), Tipitaka, and others. These revered books impart great wisdom and beauty to believers and are appreciated and respected by non-believers as well.

Therefore, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives recognizes and celebrates of the religious diversity encompassed by Pennsylvania as a fulfillment of the vision of William Penn; and

Be It Resolved that, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives declares the year 2012 as "the Year of Religious Diversity" throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and continues to welcome all to Pennsylvania in the spirit of our founder.