
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 405 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY KRUEGER, JUNE 14, 2019

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
JUNE 14, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the centennial of the Commonwealth's ratification
2 of the 19th Amendment on June 24, 2019, and recognizing the
3 Justice Bell as a symbol of the suffrage cause.

4 WHEREAS, Passed by the Congress of the United States on June
5 4, 1919, and ratified by the Commonwealth on June 24, 1919, the
6 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States provides
7 that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the
8 United States or by any State on account of sex"; and

9 WHEREAS, On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified
10 as approved by 36 state legislatures; and

11 WHEREAS, on August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was certified
12 by the United States Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby; and

13 WHEREAS, Millions of women voted in national elections for
14 the first time in 1920; and

15 WHEREAS, The social and political movement to secure equal
16 voting rights for women originated at the historic Seneca Falls,
17 New York Convention of 1848; and

18 WHEREAS, A resolution drafted there states that "it is the

1 duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their
2 sacred right to the elective franchise"; and

3 WHEREAS, While some state legislatures enacted suffrage laws,
4 the Congress of the United States blocked or defeated proposed
5 constitutional amendments; and

6 WHEREAS, Diverse activism and opposition continued into the
7 20th century; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1915, the General Assembly agreed to a referendum
9 for a suffrage amendment to the Constitution of Pennsylvania;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, As part of the lobbying campaign to urge male voters
12 to expand the State electorate and then "announce the completion
13 of democracy," Katharine Wentworth Ruschenberger of Tredyffrin
14 Township, Chester County, commissioned a near replica of the
15 Liberty Bell; and

16 WHEREAS, Known as the Justice Bell or the Women's Liberty
17 Bell, the bell is inscribed:

18 ESTABLISH JUSTICE
19 PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE
20 INHABITANTS THEREOF
21 MENEELY BELL CO
22 TROY, NY
23 MCMXV;

24 and

25 WHEREAS, A flatbed truck carried the Justice Bell, with its
26 bronze clapper silenced by chains, to all 67 Pennsylvania
27 counties; and

28 WHEREAS, When the 1915 Statewide referendum failed by a vote
29 of 385,348 to 441,034, the Justice Bell tour continued in other
30 states; and

1 WHEREAS, The Justice Bell was present at the Victory
2 Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association
3 in Chicago in 1920; and

4 WHEREAS, The Justice Bell's clapper was unchained on
5 September 25, 1920, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia; and

6 WHEREAS, The Justice Bell is permanently displayed at the
7 Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge; therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commemorate the
9 centennial of the Commonwealth's ratification of the 19th
10 Amendment on June 24, 2019, and recognize the Justice Bell as a
11 symbol of the suffrage cause.