

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 14

P5, P1

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By: **Delegate Walkup**

Introduced and read first time: March 4, 2010

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Recognition of Captain Lambert Wickes of Maryland – Revolutionary War**
3 **Naval Hero**

4 FOR the purpose of designating October 1 of each year as “Captain Lambert
5 Wickes Day” in Maryland.

6 WHEREAS, Lambert Wickes was born in Kent County, Maryland around 1742,
7 where he lived on Eastern Neck Island in the family home, Wickcliffe, overlooking the
8 Chesapeake Bay; and

9 WHEREAS, Captain Wickes served as an apprentice sailor and later
10 commanded vessels for prominent Maryland and Pennsylvania merchants, including
11 Thomas Willing and Robert Morris, and was elected to the prestigious Captains of
12 Ships Charitable Club in Philadelphia in 1770; and

13 WHEREAS, In recognition of Captain Wickes’ loyalty to the American cause for
14 independence and his reputable maritime experience, the Continental Congress
15 commissioned him as captain in 1776, placed him in command of the 16–gun Reprisal,
16 the first warship named to reflect America’s intent for retaliatory action against
17 England, and listed Captain Wickes as 11th in seniority in the Continental Navy; and

18 WHEREAS, Captain Wickes’ first major assignment was to join Captain John
19 Barry in giving safe passage to Philadelphia merchants through Delaware Bay and, in
20 June 1776, Captain Wickes and Captain John Barry defended the Continental
21 brigantine Nancy when attacked by British men–of–war near Cape May, New Jersey;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, In July 1776, the Committee of Secret Correspondence of the
24 Continental Congress commissioned Captain Wickes to transport American agent
25 William Bingham aboard the Reprisal to Saint–Pierre on the Caribbean island of the
26 French colony of Martinique and to return with munitions for George Washington’s
27 armies, and while in the West Indies, Captain Wickes captured his first of many
28 vessels as prizes to fund the American Revolution; and



1 WHEREAS, On July 27, 1776, Captain Wickes successfully engaged the HMS
2 Shark near the harbor of Saint–Pierre, a dramatic battle that made Captain Wickes a
3 hero in Martinique, where he became the first American naval captain officially
4 received by a foreign government; and

5 WHEREAS, In October 1776, Captain Wickes was selected for a secret mission
6 to transport Benjamin Franklin to France, and, upon their arrival, Wickes became the
7 first Continental Navy officer – and the Reprisal the first vessel flying the Continental
8 flag – to enter European waters; and

9 WHEREAS, Captain Wickes’ Reprisal became the first American warship to
10 base operations in Europe, successfully pursuing the British and their allies in foreign
11 commercial channels; and, in 1777, Captain Wickes commanded America’s first
12 forward–deployed squadron in foreign waters; and

13 WHEREAS, Captain Wickes’ strategies and diplomacy contributed to France’s
14 ultimate decision to abandon neutrality and join America’s war against England, an
15 alliance which was a critical factor in America’s victory; and

16 WHEREAS, On October 1, 1777, Captain Wickes made the ultimate sacrifice for
17 his country when he perished, along with 128 men aboard the Reprisal, after the ship
18 foundered in a gale off Newfoundland on their return to America; and

19 WHEREAS, Captain Lambert Wickes of the Continental Navy consistently
20 exemplified courage, patriotism, seamanship, initiative, determination, humility, and
21 humanity – yet Captain Wickes has been accorded no military burial and no State or
22 national commemoration befitting his outstanding dedication and personal sacrifice to
23 the United States and generations of Americans; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the Maryland General Assembly recognize the role of
25 Captain Lambert Wickes of Maryland in the successful outcome of the American
26 Revolutionary War and the significance of his contributions to America’s legacy of
27 national independence, which has served as a model of liberty for the world; and be it
28 further

29 RESOLVED, That the Maryland General Assembly designate October 1 of each
30 year as “Captain Lambert Wickes Day” in Maryland; and be it further

31 RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland shall partner with the United States
32 Navy to develop and conduct a fitting memorial event on the grounds of the United
33 States Naval Academy each October 1st honoring the service and sacrifice of
34 Maryland’s Captain Lambert Wickes of the Continental Navy; and be it further

35 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
36 Legislative Services to the President of the United States, the presiding officers of the
37 United States Congress, the members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation, the

- 1 Secretary of the United States Navy, and the Superintendent of the United States
- 2 Naval Academy.