
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 153 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY BRENNAN, GREEN, KHAN, PARKER, FLICK, PISCIOTTANO,
SANCHEZ, HILL-EVANS, SCHLOSSBERG, PIELLI, RABB, HADDOCK,
KINSEY, MENTZER, GIRAL, M. JONES, SMITH-WADE-EL, VITALI AND
KAZEEM, JUNE 14, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JUNE 14, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing November 19, 2023, as "Roy Campanella Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The product of an interracial marriage, Roy
4 Campanella was born November 19, 1921, in Philadelphia to a
5 Black mother and a father of Sicilian descent; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella's family lived in the Germantown
7 section of Philadelphia at the time of his birth but moved to
8 the Nicetown neighborhood in Philadelphia when he was seven
9 years of age; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella attended Gillespie Junior High and
11 Simon Gratz High School and was denied opportunities to work in
12 Major League Baseball because he was Black; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella started playing professional baseball
14 full time at the age of 16 with the Baltimore Elite Giants of
15 the Negro National League; and

16 WHEREAS, Just two years later, Mr. Campanella led the
17 Baltimore Elite Giants to their first Negro National League

1 title win and held a season batting average of .353; and

2 WHEREAS, During the 1942 season, Mr. Campanella played for
3 the Monterrey Sultans of the Mexican League, and he continued in
4 the Mexican League for the 1943 season before returning to the
5 Negro National League for the 1944 and 1945 seasons; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1946, Mr. Campanella and Don Newcombe played
7 together in the Class B New England League for the Nashua
8 Dodgers, a Minor League affiliate of the Brooklyn Dodgers,
9 making this team the first integrated affiliated baseball team
10 in the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella was signed by Branch Rickey of the
12 Brooklyn Dodgers, joining Jackie Robinson and others to become
13 one of the first Black players to break baseball's color barrier
14 when he made his debut 75 years ago; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella dealt with racism throughout his
16 career, including being denied accommodations in his hometown of
17 Philadelphia during his rookie season with other Black teammates
18 at the Bellevue Stratford, causing him to stay at his parents'
19 home at 1528 Kerbaugh Street in Nicetown with Jackie Robinson;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Sportswriters often referred to Mr. Campanella as
22 "The Cat" because of his feline-like quickness, blocking stray
23 pitches or pouncing on bunts in front of the home plate; and

24 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella was named the National League's Most
25 Valuable Player three times, was selected for the All-Star Game
26 in eight straight seasons, was recognized as the best fielding
27 catcher in the league in the 1950s and played in five World
28 Series, including the Dodgers win in 1955; and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella was considered one of the greatest
30 catchers in the history of professional baseball, was elected to

1 the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1969 and had his number 39 jersey
2 retired by the Dodgers, following a career that included 260
3 home runs, 1,019 runs batted in, a batting average of .283, and
4 a more than 57% career caught-stealing rate, the highest for any
5 catcher in the history of Major League Baseball; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella broke his neck and was paralyzed from
7 the chest down after a traffic accident in 1958, which ended his
8 professional baseball playing career; and

9 WHEREAS, After his baseball career, Mr. Campanella found his
10 "second life" as a coach and disability advocate, serving as an
11 inspiration to many across the world, including those with
12 disabilities; and

13 WHEREAS, With the same perseverance, tenacity and character
14 that made him an exceptional baseball player, Mr. Campanella's
15 drive in his physical rehabilitation and his tenacity to inspire
16 and improve the lives of others, including to several future
17 Hall of Fame players, made him a symbol of dignity, hope and
18 perseverance for all; and

19 WHEREAS, After his accident, Mr. Campanella remained a part
20 of the Dodgers family, working in public relations, helping with
21 scouting and serving as a special instructor and advisor at the
22 Dodger's Vero Beach Spring Training facility; and

23 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella was always a person who challenged
24 what was possible and viewed physical therapy as a lifeline; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Campanella and his physical therapists made a
26 deal: he would work and they would help him live his life to the
27 fullest; and

28 WHEREAS, Despite the odds, Mr. Campanella regained use of his
29 arms through his dedication to treatment and the work of his
30 skilled physical therapists; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1991, to give back and to honor the skilled
2 therapists that helped enrich his life, Mr. Campanella and his
3 wife, Roxie, founded The Roy and Roxie Campanella Physical
4 Therapy Scholarship Foundation, which provides support for those
5 living with paraplegia and funds scholarships for students who
6 pursue degrees in physical therapy; and

7 WHEREAS, On June 26, 1993, Mr. Campanella died of a heart
8 attack at 71 years of age; and

9 WHEREAS, Despite his career as an excellent baseball player,
10 a pioneer for civil rights and a champion for all people,
11 particularly those living with disabilities, Roy Campanella does
12 not yet have any baseball fields, playgrounds, schools or
13 streets named after him in his hometown of Philadelphia;
14 therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the life
16 and legacy of Roy Campanella by recognizing November 19, 2023,
17 as "Roy Campanella Day" in Pennsylvania and commemorate the 75th
18 anniversary of the start of his Major League Baseball playing
19 career and the day that would have been his 102nd birthday.