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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 395 Session of  
2013

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INTRODUCED BY BRIGGS, MICOZZIE, YOUNGBLOOD, COHEN, SONNEY,  
READSHAW, MCNEILL, FREEMAN, LUCAS, PARKER, O'NEILL,  
CALTAGIRONE, NEILSON, V. BROWN, COX, MAJOR, HARHART, STERN,  
ROZZI, MILLARD, KORTZ, VEREB, KILLION, DIGIROLAMO, BOBACK,  
HAHN, MIRABITO, GROVE, GIBBONS, PAINTER, C. HARRIS, MAHONEY,  
P. DALEY, BIZZARRO, BARRAR, PASHINSKI, BROWNLEE, BAKER,  
GRELL, GODSHALL, KIRKLAND, MILNE, MCCARTER, HEFFLEY, TOEPEL,  
ROCK, O'BRIEN, WATSON, GINGRICH, WHITE, PETRI, HESS, GOODMAN,  
GILLEN, MURT, FLECK AND DENLINGER, JUNE 25, 2013

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
JUNE 25, 2013

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A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the 120th anniversary of the founding of Valley  
2 Forge State Park as Pennsylvania's first State park.

3 WHEREAS, After a tough campaign of battles, General George  
4 Washington and his Continental Army troops encamped in the area  
5 of what is known today as Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in mid-  
6 December 1777; and

7 WHEREAS, At that time, the area was a small farming community  
8 with little available accommodations for the approximately  
9 12,000 troops that descended upon the region; and

10 WHEREAS, While some of the officers spent the winter in log  
11 huts built by the troops, the majority of the men spent the  
12 winter huddled together in tents to escape the freezing  
13 temperatures; and

14 WHEREAS, Not only were the conditions in the camp almost

1 unbearable, as the men were forced to live in damp, crowded  
2 quarters, but they also suffered from a lack of adequate food  
3 and clothing; and

4 WHEREAS, In this environment, communicable diseases such as  
5 typhoid, dysentery, typhus and pneumonia ran rampant through the  
6 camp and eventually claimed the lives of approximately 2,000  
7 troops; and

8 WHEREAS, The situation was so bad at one point during the  
9 winter encampment at Valley Forge General Washington wrote,  
10 "that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes  
11 place... this Army must inevitably... starve, dissolve or  
12 disperse, in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they  
13 can"; and

14 WHEREAS, In February, almost miraculously, the weather began  
15 to ease and the coming of spring brought more food and clothing  
16 and by June, the threadbare troops were transformed into a  
17 fighting force; and

18 WHEREAS, On June 19, 1778, the army marched away from Valley  
19 Forge in pursuit of the British forces who were moving toward  
20 New York; and

21 WHEREAS, In subsequent battles, these troops under the  
22 leadership of George Washington performed courageously; and

23 WHEREAS, As such, the encampment at Valley Forge has come to  
24 be known as a testament of the courage, perseverance and  
25 determination of the early settlers to break free of British  
26 tyranny and establish an independent nation; and

27 WHEREAS, In subsequent years, efforts of Pennsylvanians to  
28 preserve the encampment at Valley Forge commenced and eventually  
29 coalesced into a group of citizens who formed the Centennial and  
30 Memorial Association of Valley Forge in 1878; and

1       WHEREAS, Within one year of its formation, the organization  
2 took possession of Washington's Headquarters and eventually  
3 acquired full ownership of the property; and

4       WHEREAS, As efforts to obtain Federal money to acquire the  
5 lands of the encampment failed, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 stepped forward to create Pennsylvania's first State park when  
7 Governor Robert E. Pattison signed Act 130 on May 30, 1893,  
8 which provided for the acquisition of ground at Valley Forge for  
9 a public park and provided for the creation of a ten-person  
10 commission that worked to acquire more land and get facilities  
11 constructed; and

12       WHEREAS, The Valley Forge Park Commission acquired lands and  
13 operated the State park independently until 1923, at which time  
14 jurisdiction was transferred to the Pennsylvania Department of  
15 Forests and Waters and eventually to the Pennsylvania Historical  
16 and Museum Commission; and

17       WHEREAS, In 1976, as part of the national bicentennial  
18 celebration, President Gerald Ford signed legislation  
19 authorizing the Federal Government to take control of the park,  
20 thereby creating the Valley Forge National Historical Park; and

21       WHEREAS, Today, the Valley Forge National Historical Park  
22 encompasses 3,500 acres, which includes restored historic  
23 buildings, reconstructed structures and monuments erected by the  
24 states from which the Continental Army soldiers came; and

25       WHEREAS, It is estimated that more than one million people  
26 from all over the country visit the park annually to tour the  
27 facilities and pay homage to the troops who braved the winter of  
28 1777-1778 to obtain the freedom we as Americans currently enjoy;  
29 and

30       WHEREAS, As such, by virtue of the commitment made by the

1 Commonwealth and its citizens, this historic site has been  
2 preserved in perpetuity as a national symbol emblematic of the  
3 strength and determination of our nation to persevere through  
4 all adversity; therefore be it

5       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commemorate the  
6 120th anniversary of the founding of Valley Forge State Park as  
7 Pennsylvania's first State park.