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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 441 Session of  
2024

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INTRODUCED BY SCOTT, KENYATTA, PIELLI, SMITH-WADE-EL, POWELL,  
KINSEY, PROBST, HILL-EVANS, GUENST, HOHENSTEIN, WAXMAN,  
SANCHEZ, KHAN, DELLOSO, HOWARD, SHUSTERMAN AND MAYES,  
MAY 20, 2024

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MAY 20, 2024

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating August 24, 2024, as "Bayard Rustin Day" in  
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Born March 17, 1912, Bayard Rustin was 1 of 12  
4 children raised by his grandparents in West Chester; and

5 WHEREAS, It was at his family home in West Chester that Mr.  
6 Rustin's lifelong commitment to nonviolent activism began  
7 through both a Quaker upbringing and the influence of his  
8 grandmother's participation in the National Association for the  
9 Advancement of Colored People; and

10 WHEREAS, As a teenager, Mr. Rustin's activism included  
11 refusing to sit in the segregated section of the cinema; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Rustin later worked for the Fellowship of  
13 Reconciliation (FOR) as a young adult, advocating for peace,  
14 labor rights and social equality; and

15 WHEREAS, This work included traveling to India to study the  
16 Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1941, Mr. Rustin served as a principal leader in

1 calling for a march on Washington to protest discrimination in  
2 the armed forces and defense sector, in response to which  
3 President Franklin Roosevelt preemptively issued an executive  
4 order ending segregation in the defense industries; and

5 WHEREAS, During this period, Mr. Rustin also cofounded the  
6 Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and participated in the CORE  
7 Journey of Reconciliation, which tested Supreme Court rulings  
8 barring segregation in interstate travel and later served as a  
9 model for the Freedom Rides of 1961; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1953, Mr. Rustin was fired from FOR because he  
11 was gay, which became one of many instances where he faced  
12 discrimination on account of his sexual orientation; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1956, Mr. Rustin met with Dr. Martin Luther King,  
14 Jr., to show his support for the Montgomery Bus Boycott and  
15 advocate for the use of nonviolent tactics in protesting racial  
16 injustices in the United States; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Rustin's influence was monumental in encouraging  
18 Dr. King to accept pacifism as a way of life and was  
19 instrumental in nonviolence becoming a cornerstone of the Civil  
20 Rights Movement; and

21 WHEREAS, Dr. King worked closely with Mr. Rustin and leaned  
22 on his brilliant strategies and organizational skills, which  
23 were on full display when he served as chief organizer for the  
24 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; and

25 WHEREAS, The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom became  
26 a landmark event credited with facilitating passage of the 1964  
27 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and

28 WHEREAS, Throughout the remainder of his life, Mr. Rustin  
29 would go on to combat social injustice, including serving as a  
30 champion for gay rights; and

1       WHEREAS, Bayard Rustin died on August 24, 1987, but his fight  
2 for nonviolent activism and social justice continues to live on  
3 among the modern-day activists who follow in his footsteps;  
4 therefore be it

5       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate August  
6 24, 2024, as "Bayard Rustin Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it  
7 further

8       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the life  
9 and significant accomplishments of this influential and often  
10 overlooked leader in our nation's history.