
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 86 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY CARROLL, KENYATTA, KRAJEWSKI, SCOTT, SMITH-WADE-
EL, MADDEN, ISAACSON, VENKAT, OTTEN, MAYES, HILL-EVANS,
SAPPEY, RABB, FREEMAN, SANCHEZ, HOHENSTEIN, GUENST, BOROWSKI,
MALAGARI AND ABNEY, FEBRUARY 21, 2025

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, FEBRUARY 21, 2025

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating March 17, 2025, as "Bayard Rustin Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Born March 17, 1912, Bayard Rustin was one 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 a cinema,
12 demonstrating his early stand against racial injustice; and

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

16 WHEREAS, His work included traveling to India to study the
17 Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence, further shaping his belief

1 in peaceful resistance as a means for achieving social justice;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, In 1941, Mr. Rustin served as a principal leader in
4 calling for a march on Washington to protest discrimination in
5 the armed forces and the defense sector, prompting President
6 Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue an executive order ending
7 segregation in defense industries; and

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

13 WHEREAS, In 1953, Mr. Rustin was fired from FOR because he
14 was gay, an example of the discrimination he faced throughout
15 his life due to his sexual orientation; and

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

20 WHEREAS, Mr. Rustin's influence was monumental in encouraging
21 Dr. King to embrace pacifism as a way of life and was
22 instrumental in making nonviolence a cornerstone of the Civil
23 Rights Movement; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. King worked closely with Mr. Rustin and relied
25 on his strategies and organizational skills, which were most
26 notably displayed when Mr. Rustin served as the chief organizer
27 for the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; and

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

1 WHEREAS, Throughout his life, Mr. Rustin continued to combat
2 social injustices, becoming a champion for gay rights in
3 addition to his work for racial equality and labor rights; and

4 WHEREAS, Bayard Rustin passed away on August 24, 1987, but
5 his legacy of nonviolent activism and social justice lives on
6 among modern-day activists who follow in his footsteps;
7 therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate March
9 17, 2025, as "Bayard Rustin Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the life
12 and significant accomplishments of Bayard Rustin, an influential
13 and often overlooked leader in our nation's history.