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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 291 Session of  
2022

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INTRODUCED BY HAYWOOD, FONTANA, KEARNEY, KANE, SCHWANK, SAVAL,  
CAPPELLETTI, HUGHES AND COLLETT, JUNE 1, 2022

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REFERRED TO STATE GOVERNMENT, JUNE 1, 2022

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A RESOLUTION

1 Urging all agencies of the Commonwealth to have the ability to  
2 use diacritical marks on names on all Commonwealth-issued  
3 documents by July 1, 2024.

4 WHEREAS, Diacritical marks are accent marks that are used in  
5 writing to place stress on a letter to change its sound; and

6 WHEREAS, Diacritical marks are commonly used in names, but  
7 currently Pennsylvania still lacks the capability to place  
8 diacritical marks on some Commonwealth-issued documents, such as  
9 driver's licenses; and

10 WHEREAS, A mismatch of names on documents and identification  
11 can lead to a host of problems, such as confirming identity,  
12 completing rental applications and applying for services such as  
13 the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and

14 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth creates and perpetuates these  
15 issues when technology is not compatible with allowing  
16 diacritical marks on letters; and

17 WHEREAS, To respect the human dignity of every individual, a  
18 person's name should be spelled correctly on official documents;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Most State agencies, such as the Department of  
3 Health, already have the ability to use diacritical marks, but  
4 the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) cannot due to its  
5 current struggles with old legacy mainframes for motor vehicles  
6 and driver's licenses, which are built on the same outdated  
7 programming language that cannot accommodate the use of  
8 diacritical marks; and

9 WHEREAS, PennDOT has begun the process to replace the  
10 mainframes in two phases, first implementing the new mainframe  
11 for the motor vehicle system and transferring all data into it  
12 before doing the same for the driver's license system, which may  
13 not be complete until as late as 2027; and

14 WHEREAS, This is far too long to wait to call Pennsylvanians  
15 by their exact names; and

16 WHEREAS, The General Assembly stands ready to assist in  
17 providing the resources necessary to speed up the process of  
18 replacing old mainframes; and

19 WHEREAS, All Pennsylvanians deserve their names to be  
20 acknowledged and accurately reflected; and

21 WHEREAS, Making certain that we call people by their names is  
22 the least that our Commonwealth can do to respect the dignity of  
23 all Pennsylvanians; therefore be it

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge all agencies  
25 of the Commonwealth to have the ability to use diacritical marks  
26 on names on all Commonwealth-issued documents by July 1, 2024.