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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 488 Session of  
2026

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INTRODUCED BY BRIGGS, SHUSTERMAN, WEBSTER, DALEY, BURGOS, HAMM,  
CARROLL, HOWARD, VENKAT, GUENST, GREINER, KHAN, NEILSON,  
BRENNAN, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ, WAXMAN, OTTEN, ANDERSON,  
HOHENSTEIN, DOUGHERTY, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, KENYATTA AND  
GALLAGHER, APRIL 20, 2026

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, RECREATION AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, APRIL 21, 2026

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating July 4, 2026, as "Valley Forge National Historical  
2 Park Day" in Pennsylvania in celebration of the 50th  
3 anniversary of Valley Forge National Historical Park.

4 WHEREAS, Valley Forge National Historical Park is known  
5 primarily as the site of the third winter encampment of General  
6 George Washington and the Continental Army during the American  
7 Revolutionary War; and

8 WHEREAS, General George Washington and the Continental Army  
9 were at the encampment from December 19, 1777, to June 19, 1778;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, In 1878, private citizens formed the Centennial and  
12 Memorial Association of Valley Forge to preserve the site; and

13 WHEREAS, Within a year, the Association took possession of  
14 Washington's Headquarters, the structure used by General George  
15 Washington and his family, along with military aides and both  
16 paid and enslaved servants, while at the encampment; and

1       WHEREAS, Washington's Headquarters, also known as the Isaac  
2 Potts House, was constructed around 1773 by the Potts family,  
3 and today much of the structure is estimated to be original to  
4 the encampment era; and

5       WHEREAS, Shortly after the Association took possession of the  
6 structure, the General Assembly appropriated \$5,000 to maintain  
7 the Headquarters; and

8       WHEREAS, Failing to receive Federal money, on May 30, 1893,  
9 Governor Robert Pattison approved legislation, Act 130 of 1893,  
10 "for the acquisition of ground at Valley Forge for a public  
11 park"; and

12       WHEREAS, Act 130 also created a 10-person commission, the  
13 Valley Forge Park Commission, which worked to acquire more land  
14 and build facilities; and

15       WHEREAS, Valley Forge State Park was established as the first  
16 State park of Pennsylvania in 1893 "to preserve, improve, and  
17 maintain as a public park the site on which the Continental Army  
18 encamped at Valley Forge"; and

19       WHEREAS, A highlight of the park's history is the 1950 Boy  
20 Scout National Jamboree, which was attended by President Harry  
21 Truman; and

22       WHEREAS, As part of the national bicentennial celebration,  
23 President Gerald Ford visited Valley Forge State Park to accept,  
24 on behalf of the Federal Government, the park as a gift from the  
25 Commonwealth; and

26       WHEREAS, On July 4, 1976, President Ford signed legislation  
27 authorizing the Federal Government to take control of the park,  
28 creating Valley Forge National Historical Park; and

29       WHEREAS, The monuments, statues and buildings that comprise  
30 Valley Forge National Historical Park evoke more than 240 years

1 of American history; and

2 WHEREAS, On December 19, 1777, more than 12,000 soldiers and  
3 400 women and children marched into Valley Forge and began to  
4 build what essentially became the fourth largest city in the  
5 colonies at the time, with approximately 1,500 log huts and two  
6 miles of fortifications; and

7 WHEREAS, Valley Forge was a naturally defensible plateau  
8 where the soldiers could train and recoup from the year's  
9 battles; and

10 WHEREAS, Regular freezing and thawing, plus intermittent  
11 snowfall and rain, along with shortages of food and clothing,  
12 made living conditions at the encampment extremely difficult;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, While there was never a battle at Valley Forge,  
15 diseases like influenza and typhoid fever killed nearly 2,000  
16 people at the encampment; and

17 WHEREAS, A delegation of Oneida and Tuscarora warriors aided  
18 the Continental Army by countering raids in the surrounding area  
19 by British soldiers, who were confiscating supplies, seizing  
20 stragglers, acquiring intelligence and harassing civilians; and

21 WHEREAS, These Native American warriors helped to capture  
22 enemy soldiers to gain important information and discourage  
23 attempts of desertions from soldiers in the Continental Army;  
24 and

25 WHEREAS, These warriors repeatedly proved themselves as  
26 exceptional scouts and superb small-unit fighters; and

27 WHEREAS, In addition to receiving battlefield assistance from  
28 Native Americans, General George Washington also attracted  
29 former Prussian officer Baron von Steuben to the cause; and

30 WHEREAS, Baron von Steuben was assigned the task of training

1 the troops of the Continental Army and is largely credited with  
2 teaching them new military skills and turning them into a  
3 disciplined and professional fighting force; and

4 WHEREAS, The Continental Army's transformative experiences at  
5 Valley Forge reshaped it into a more unified force capable of  
6 defeating the British and winning American independence during  
7 the remaining five years of the Revolutionary War; and

8 WHEREAS, The concepts of basic training, the  
9 professionalization of the officer corps and the rise of the  
10 United States Army's distinctive branches, such as the Corps of  
11 Engineers, all got their start at the encampment in Valley  
12 Forge; and

13 WHEREAS, Reforms to the supply system and fighting tactics,  
14 along with reforms in military hygiene and organization, became  
15 the foundation of the modern United States Army, with many  
16 regarding Valley Forge as the birthplace of the United States  
17 Army; and

18 WHEREAS, Located in Valley Forge National Historical Park,  
19 the area known as Muhlenberg's Brigade is the site of the  
20 encampment of the Virginia troops of the Revolutionary War led  
21 by Brigadier General Peter Muhlenberg during the winter of 1777-  
22 1778; and

23 WHEREAS, Today, the Muhlenberg's Brigade site consists of  
24 nine reconstructed log huts; and

25 WHEREAS, The Muhlenberg's Brigade site is the primary  
26 location of Valley Forge's living history program, in which park  
27 rangers and volunteers dress in 18th-century attire and provide  
28 glimpses of what life was like during the Valley Forge  
29 encampment; and

30 WHEREAS, Some of the log huts at Muhlenberg's Brigade contain

1 exhibits that provide information about the construction of the  
2 huts, entrenchments and fortifications of the encampment, as  
3 well as the daily routine and living conditions of officers and  
4 soldiers; and

5 WHEREAS, The National Memorial Arch, also located in Valley  
6 Forge National Historical Park, was erected to commemorate the  
7 arrival of General George Washington and the Continental Army in  
8 Valley Forge; and

9 WHEREAS, The National Memorial Arch was designed by Paul  
10 Philippe Cret as a simplified version of the Arch of Titus in  
11 Rome, Italy; and

12 WHEREAS, Also located in Valley Forge National Historical  
13 Park, the Patriots of African Descent Monument is a granite  
14 block with carved text and a bronze bas-relief depicting three  
15 soldiers of African descent, one facing left, one facing right,  
16 and one facing straight ahead; and

17 WHEREAS, The back of the Patriots of African Descent Monument  
18 includes the following: "In Honor of the PATRIOTS OF AFRICAN  
19 DESCENT who served, suffered, and sacrificed during the Valley  
20 Forge Encampment 1777-1778"; and

21 WHEREAS, In Washington's Secret War: The Hidden History of  
22 Valley Forge, author Thomas Fleming cites work by independent  
23 researcher George Quintal, who used pension records and other  
24 sources to document at least 500 African Americans at the  
25 encampment in Valley Forge; and

26 WHEREAS, The First Rhode Island Regiment, in General James  
27 Varnum's Brigade at Valley Forge, included many African American  
28 and Native American soldiers; and

29 WHEREAS, During the encampment at Valley Forge, most of the  
30 Continental Army's cannons and other artillery were stored in

1 the area of the park now known as Artillery Park; and

2 WHEREAS, From a central location, cannons could be rushed to  
3 dirt mound defenses located throughout the encampment to help  
4 stop an attack by the British; and

5 WHEREAS, Even with this reliable and flexible defense, the  
6 Continental Army still had to coax often starving horses to pull  
7 the cannons through deep, muddy camp roads, a near impossible  
8 task; and

9 WHEREAS, Brigadier General Henry Knox commanded and trained  
10 approximately 630 officers and soldiers from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd  
11 and 4th Continental regiments at this location; and

12 WHEREAS, Valley Creek and the Schuylkill River run through  
13 the park, making it a prime location for water activities such  
14 as fishing, canoeing and kayaking; and

15 WHEREAS, With more than 3,600 acres of rolling hills,  
16 designated picnic areas, a six-mile multiuse trail, 35 miles of  
17 designated hiking trails, 19 miles of biking trails and 17 miles  
18 of horse trails, the park is a magnet for runners, bicyclists,  
19 picnickers and other outdoor enthusiasts; and

20 WHEREAS, The park hosts annual events, such as the Valley  
21 Forge Revolutionary 5-Mile Run, the March-In, which commemorates  
22 the arrival of the Continental Army in Valley Forge, and the  
23 March-Out, which commemorates the Army's departure from Valley  
24 Forge; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate July 4,  
26 2026, as "Valley Forge National Historical Park Day" in  
27 Pennsylvania in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Valley  
28 Forge National Historical Park.