

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 69 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY READSHAW, BARBIN, GOODMAN, BARRAR, ENGLISH, MAHER, HARPER, PAYNE, BENNINGHOFF, DUSH, SACCONI, KIRKLAND, COX, DONATUCCI, CUTLER, QUIGLEY, COHEN, MATZIE, V. BROWN, WHEELAND, KINSEY, BOBACK, KOTIK, KILLION, VEREB, HICKERNELL, SONNEY, SCHLOSSBERG, DIGIROLAMO, KAUFFMAN, SCHWEYER, KIM, LONGIETTI, KORTZ, FRANKEL, DAVIS, MARSHALL, GRELL, FREEMAN, FARINA, BAKER, TALLMAN, MILLARD, W. KELLER, GROVE, D. COSTA, HAHN, MAJOR, DeLUCA, HEFFLEY, KNOWLES, DRISCOLL, C. PARKER, METZGAR, A. HARRIS, MAHONEY, HARHAI, PICKETT, GABLER, WATSON, GIBBONS, O'NEILL, THOMAS, OBERLANDER, ELLIS, GINGRICH, SABATINA, MURT, ROZZI AND QUINN, FEBRUARY 9, 2015

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, FEBRUARY 9, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating February 19, 2015, as "The Battle of Iwo Jima
 2 Remembrance Day" in Pennsylvania and recognizing the heroic
 3 contributions of Sergeant Michael Strank from Johnstown and
 4 the five other service members who raised the United States
 5 flag during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

6 WHEREAS, The Battle of Iwo Jima, which took place 70 years
 7 ago and is recognized as the turning point of the Pacific War,
 8 claimed one-third of all Marines killed in World War II and
 9 resulted in the most casualties in Marine Corps history; and

10 WHEREAS, The 36-day assault from February 19 to March 26,
 11 1945, claimed the lives of 6,821 American troops and wounded
 12 19,217 American troops, and two soldiers were taken into
 13 captivity; and

14 WHEREAS, The Japanese on the island lost 18,844 of their

1 22,060 soldiers in the fighting or by ritual suicide, an
2 additional 216 soldiers were captured and approximately 300
3 soldiers were hidden in caves and tunnels for days; and

4 WHEREAS, The Battle of Iwo Jima still looms large in our
5 history by its complexity, ferocity and character of its
6 combatants; and

7 WHEREAS, On February 23, 1945, five Marines, Sgt. Michael
8 Strank, Cpl. Harlon Block, Pfc. Franklin Sousley, Pfc. Ira Hayes
9 and Cpl. Rene Gagnon, and one Navy Hospital Corpsman, PhM2. John
10 Bradley, were immortalized in a photograph by Joe Rosenthal
11 raising the flag of the United States atop Mount Suribachi; and

12 WHEREAS, The photograph has since become the most recognized
13 symbol of sacrifice and American resolve; and

14 WHEREAS, Sgt. Strank, hailing from Johnstown, safely directed
15 the group to the top of the mount and instructed the group to
16 raise the United States flag so that "every Marine on this
17 cruddy island can see it"; and

18 WHEREAS, Sgt. Strank's right hand is the only hand of any of
19 the group not on the pole as his right hand was around the wrist
20 of Pfc. Sousley, helping the younger man push the heavy pole;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Shortly after the immortalized photograph was taken,
23 Sgt. Strank, Cpl. Block and Pfc. Sousley died in battle on Iwo
24 Jima; and

25 WHEREAS, Gen. James L. Jones, 32nd Commandant of the Marine
26 Corps, said, "the valor and sacrifice of the Marines and Sailors
27 who fought on Iwo Jima is, today and forever, the standard by
28 which we judge what we are and what we might become"; and

29 WHEREAS, On February 21, 2015, in Johnstown, Sgt. Strank and
30 the five other service members that raised the United States

1 flag during the Battle of Iwo Jima will be honored in the
2 documentary "Our Flag Still Waives: The Sergeant Michael Strank
3 Project"; and

4 WHEREAS, It is fitting that the symbolism of the solidarity
5 of the United States flag-raising on Iwo Jima be recognized for
6 its significance in our history; therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate
8 February 19, 2015, as "The Battle of Iwo Jima Remembrance Day"
9 in Pennsylvania and recognize the heroic contributions of
10 Sergeant Michael Strank from Johnstown and the five other
11 service members who raised the United States flag during the
12 Battle of Iwo Jima.