

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 259 Session of 2025

INTRODUCED BY PIELLI, RIVERA, VENKAT, MERSKI, GIRAL, MADDEN, VITALI, PROBST, GUENST, PASHINSKI, HOHENSTEIN, HOWARD, BRENNAN, NEILSON, SCHLOSSBERG, SANCHEZ, MALAGARI, D. WILLIAMS, BELLMON, O'MARA, CERRATO, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, DAVIDSON, STEELE, K.HARRIS, SHUSTERMAN, SAMUELSON, PROKOPIAK, DONAHUE, HOGAN, HEFFLEY, WAXMAN, HANBIDGE, TAKAC, KOZAK, BRIGGS AND GILLEN, JUNE 16, 2025

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, RECREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JUNE 16, 2025

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing August 24, 2025, as "Ukrainian Independence Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, On August 24, 1991, after the failed coup attempt on
4 Mikhail Gorbachev, Ukraine's Supreme Council voted to declare
5 Ukraine's independence; and

6 WHEREAS, Ukraine's Supreme Council called for an independence
7 referendum on December 1 that year; and

8 WHEREAS, With some 32 million people turning out to vote,
9 representing 84.1% of eligible voters, 90.32% of voters voted in
10 favor of independence; and

11 WHEREAS, Every oblast in Ukraine, including Crimea where
12 ethnic Russians form a substantial majority of the population,
13 voted in favor of independence; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1994, as part of the Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine
15 agreed to completely relinquish its nuclear arsenal, which it

1 inherited from the collapsed Soviet Union, in exchange for an
2 assurance that the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia
3 would respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and refrain from
4 the use or threat of military force; and

5 WHEREAS, Since declaring its independence, Ukraine has been
6 caught between pro-Western and pro-Russian factions; and

7 WHEREAS, The 2004 Presidential Election exemplified these
8 tensions, with the pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko facing off
9 against the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych; and

10 WHEREAS, Yanukovych was declared the winner of the election
11 after the runoff; and

12 WHEREAS, The runoff vote was marred by allegations of fraud
13 that seemed to try to skew the election in favor of Yanukovych;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, A large protest movement emerged in Kyiv to
16 peacefully demonstrate against the results and call for a free
17 and fair revote, which later came to be known as the Orange
18 Revolution; and

19 WHEREAS, Yielding to the pressure of the demonstrators, a new
20 round of voting occurred on December 26, and Yushchenko emerged
21 as the winner; and

22 WHEREAS, Yushchenko intended to move Ukraine towards the
23 European Union and declared European Union membership as a
24 critical goal; and

25 WHEREAS, In March 2007, negotiations began between Ukraine
26 and the European Union for an enhanced agreement to replace the
27 previous partnership and cooperation agreement; and

28 WHEREAS, During the next few years, Ukraine and the European
29 Union continued to negotiate on what would become the
30 association agreement, typically used as a stepping stone for

1 the eventual ascension into the European Union; and

2 WHEREAS, Yanukovych, whose earlier victory in 2004 was
3 overturned by the courts, won the election to become President
4 of Ukraine in 2010; and

5 WHEREAS, Under pressure from Russia, the Ukrainian Government
6 of pro-Russian President Yanukovych decided not to sign the
7 association agreement with the European Union in November 2013;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Demonstrations ensued in Kyiv, later becoming what
10 is known as the Euromaidan protests; and

11 WHEREAS, The protests turned violent and grew in size after
12 government crackdown on the protesters; and

13 WHEREAS, In February 2014, some European foreign ministers
14 mediated a compromise, involving a unity government; and

15 WHEREAS, After the collapse of a power-sharing agreement on
16 February 22, President Yanukovych disappeared from Ukraine and a
17 new government was installed by the Ukrainian parliament; and

18 WHEREAS, Toward the end of February, unidentified military
19 figures, later confirmed to be Russian personnel, surrounded the
20 airports in Crimea, and the Crimean autonomous assembly was then
21 seized by pro-Russian forces; and

22 WHEREAS, In March 2014, the Crimean autonomous assembly
23 issued a declaration of independence and a subsequent referendum
24 on union with Russia was held; and

25 WHEREAS, According to Russian election officials, 95.5% of
26 voters supported union with Russia, the results of which were
27 not internationally recognized; and

28 WHEREAS, Shortly after the Crimean referendum, pro-Russian
29 separatists in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and
30 Luhansk held independence referendums; and

1 WHEREAS, Armed conflict in the regions quickly broke out
2 between Russian-backed forces and the Ukrainian military, though
3 the conflict transitioned into an active stalemate; and

4 WHEREAS, In October 2021, after months of intelligence
5 gathering, the White House had a briefing with United States
6 intelligence, military and diplomatic leaders on a near-certain,
7 mass-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine; and

8 WHEREAS, In mid-December 2021, Russia's foreign ministry
9 called on the United States and NATO to cease military activity
10 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, commit to no further NATO
11 expansion toward Russia and prevent Ukraine from joining NATO in
12 the future; and

13 WHEREAS, The United States and NATO rejected these demands
14 and threatened to impose severe economic sanctions on Russia;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, In early February 2022, satellite imagery showed the
17 largest deployment of Russian troops to its border with Belarus
18 since the end of the Cold War; and

19 WHEREAS, Negotiations between the United States, Russia and
20 European powers failed to bring about a resolution; and

21 WHEREAS, On February 24, 2022, during a last-ditch United
22 Nations Security Council effort to dissuade Russia from invading
23 Ukraine, Putin announced the beginning of a full-scale land, sea
24 and air invasion, targeting Ukrainian military assets and cities
25 across the country; and

26 WHEREAS, In the three years since the start of the unjust
27 invasion, Russia has killed tens of thousands of soldiers and
28 civilians while destroying large swaths of Ukraine; and

29 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has made important contributions to
30 Ukraine's defense and fight for freedom, with munitions plants

1 providing critical weaponry; and

2 WHEREAS, In September 2024, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy
3 visited the Scranton Ammunition Plant and met with Governor
4 Shapiro; and

5 WHEREAS, During the visit, Governor Shapiro signed an
6 agreement with the Zaporizhzhia Regional State Administration to
7 leverage the strengths of both regions and support the region's
8 efforts to rebuild after the war while providing Pennsylvania
9 businesses an opportunity to participate in the reconstruction;
10 therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
12 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recognize August 24, 2025, as
13 "Ukrainian Independence Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
15 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, acknowledging that Pennsylvania is
16 the cradle of freedom and democracy, recognize and support the
17 same spirit of 1776 exhibited by the brave Ukrainian freedom
18 fighters; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
20 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the United States President
21 and the United States Congress to continue supporting Ukraine
22 and not waver on the cause of freedom and democracy; and be it
23 further

24 RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the House of
25 Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to the
26 President of the United States, the Governor of Pennsylvania and
27 to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.