
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 81 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY HAYWOOD, HUGHES, CAPPELLETTI, BREWSTER, ROBINSON,
FONTANA, SANTARSIERO, COSTA, DILLON, KANE AND STREET,
MARCH 28, 2023

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, MARCH 28, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing April 12, 2023, as the 159th anniversary of the Fort
2 Pillow Massacre, in honor of the fallen soldiers who lost
3 their lives during this battle.

4 WHEREAS, The Battle of Fort Pillow occurred on April 12,
5 1864, in Fort Pillow, Tennessee, during the American Civil War;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Prior to the battle, the fort was being occupied by
8 a garrison of more than 600 Union servicemen, approximately one-
9 half of whom were Black soldiers; and

10 WHEREAS, On the morning of April 12, 1864, approximately
11 1,500 to 2,000 Confederate soldiers, led by General Nathan
12 Bedford Forrest, surrounded and attacked the fort; and

13 WHEREAS, By the afternoon of April 12, 1864, General Forrest
14 demanded surrender from the fort's troops following a 20-minute
15 cease fire; and

16 WHEREAS, The fort's commander, Union Major William Bradford,
17 abandoned the fort and his troops, attempting to find Union
18 reinforcements supposedly stationed on the Mississippi River;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, A majority of the Union garrison surrendered and
3 thus should have been taken as prisoners of war; and

4 WHEREAS, Confederate and Union witness accounts state that
5 instead of being taken as prisoners of war, approximately 300
6 Union soldiers were gunned down and killed, including servicemen
7 who were already wounded; and

8 WHEREAS, Approximately 200 of the approximately 300 Union
9 soldiers killed were Black servicemen; and

10 WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States opened an
11 investigation into the battle, where witnesses stated that a
12 majority of the wounds suffered by Union soldiers targeted the
13 torso and head from point-blank range; and

14 WHEREAS, The Congressional inquiry determined that 70% of
15 White soldiers survived the battle, while only 35% of Black
16 soldiers survived; and

17 WHEREAS, The events that occurred during the Battle of Fort
18 Pillow led to the Union's refusal to participate in further
19 prisoner exchanges with the Confederate army; and

20 WHEREAS, This massacre did not deter other Black servicemen
21 from serving in the Union army, but instead increased their
22 resolve, many of whom proceeded to use "Remember Fort Pillow" as
23 a battle cry; and

24 WHEREAS, The site of the battle is well preserved and is now
25 the Fort Pillow State Historic Park in Tennessee; and

26 WHEREAS, April 12, 2023, will be the 159th anniversary of the
27 Battle of Fort Pillow; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize April 12, 2023, as the
29 159th anniversary of the Fort Pillow Massacre, in honor of the
30 fallen soldiers who lost their lives during this battle.