

A RESOLUTION recognizing March as Irish American Heritage Month for Kentucky.

WHEREAS, from our country's earliest days, Irish Immigrants and their descendants have contributed leadership, wisdom, and vitality to not only Kentucky but America as a whole. Through nine signers of the Declaration of Independence and 22 Presidents with Irish roots, Irish Americans have made an indelible mark in the shaping of the great city of Louisville and the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, throughout their long history, the Irish have been ardent in their passion for liberty, their hatred of oppression, and renowned for their loyalty. The Irish have from the beginning been prominent in the defense of this nation. Twenty of George Washington's generals and an estimated quarter of his Continental Army were composed of Irish Americans. The first officer commissioned by Washington in the newly formed Navy was an Irishman named John Barry, who became Commodore of the Continental Navy; and

WHEREAS, in 1804, pirates had attacked the United States Navy and civilian ships were kidnapped and imprisoned in Derne and Tripoli. When negotiations to pay a ransom of \$100,000 failed to gain their release and the American flag staff was cut down in front of the United States Consulate, war was declared against Tripoli. On April 27, 1805, Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon of Kentucky led a charge passing through a shower of enemy gunfire and took possession of enemy batteries, posting an American flag on its ramparts and turning the guns on the enemy. Victory was won in the ensuing two-hour battle and for the first time in U.S. history, an American flag flew over a fortress of the Old World. O'Bannon's deeds are remembered in the Marine Corps Hymn and the flag of the Corps, and the sword used in the dress uniform of the Corps is a copy of the one presented to O'Bannon by Hamet, a chieftain and ally of the United States in the Mediterranean. The final resting place of Lieutenant O'Bannon is the cemetery hill overlooking our state capital in Frankfort; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Waldo Rose, born in 1885 of Irish parents, attended the University of Michigan on scholarship to compete on their track team in the shotput, discus, and hammer throw. In 1904, Rose competed in the Olympics in St. Louis winning a gold, silver, and bronze medal in these events respectively. Rose was selected by the 1908 Olympic Committee to carry the United States flag in the opening ceremonies in the Summer Olympics in London. When passing King Edward the Seventh, Rose broke tradition and refused to dip the flag to the British King. No United States flag has ever been dipped to any monarch since; and

WHEREAS, on election day August 6, 1855, in Louisville, Kentucky, numerous Irish were among the immigrants that were brutally murdered. The crimes occurred as the immigrants were trying to go to the polls to cast their ballots in attacks orchestrated by a local political group known as the "Know Nothings," because they felt that the large influx of immigrants would "undermine the American way of life"; and

WHEREAS, the Irish community of Louisville has a distinguished tradition of putting on the St. Patrick's Parade the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day on March 17, thereby renewing their connections to the land of their ancestry as they pass along the traditions of the Irish people to the next generation and celebrating their pride and heritage with the community irrespective of ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to celebrate the rich culture, heritage, and valuable contributions of the Irish people during the month of March, when people of Irish decent celebrate the Patron Saint of Ireland, St. Patrick, on March 17;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. Due to the overwhelming number of citizens within the Commonwealth of Kentucky who are Irish or are descendents of Irish immigrants and the tremendous contributions of Irish Americans to our nation, our Commonwealth, and our

communities, the House of Representatives hereby recognizes March as Irish American Heritage Month for Kentucky.

➔Section 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Kevin Powers, Ancient Order of the Hibernians, P.O. Box 206176, Louisville, Kentucky 40250.