
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 383 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, THOMAS, SIPTROTH, BLACKWELL, JAMES,
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BOBACK AND CLYMER, SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing that more than 160 million people in India are
2 considered untouchable and dehumanized by the caste system.

3 WHEREAS, The caste system, which dates back more than 2,000
4 years, divides the population into higher castes which include
5 priests and warriors and lower caste such as laborers; and

6 WHEREAS, The untouchables' most basic needs are not
7 fulfilled, and untouchables face great difficulties in accessing
8 employment, education, food and health care; and

9 WHEREAS, Most untouchables are among the poorest people in
10 the world, living on less than \$1 per day; and

11 WHEREAS, India's untouchables are relegated to undesirable
12 jobs and live in constant fear of being publicly humiliated,
13 paraded naked, beaten and raped with impunity by upper caste
14 Hindus seeking to keep them in their place; and

15 WHEREAS, The police, village councils and government
16 officials often support the caste system, which is based on

1 Hindu religious teachings; and

2 WHEREAS, Many crimes go unreported due to fear of reprisal,
3 police intimidation, inability to pay bribes demanded by police
4 or simply the knowledge that the police will do nothing; and

5 WHEREAS, At the bottom of the untouchable caste are Dalits;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Nearly 90% of all poor Indians and 95% of all
8 illiterate Indians are Dalits; and

9 WHEREAS, Every hour two Dalits are assaulted and every day
10 three women are raped, two Dalits are murdered and two Dalit
11 homes are torched; and

12 WHEREAS, The caste system, a powerful tool for social
13 segregation, runs deep in the minds of Indians and has
14 implications in everyday life; therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, acknowledging
16 that caste-based discrimination is institutionalized throughout
17 India and that its corrosive influence on the Indian people must
18 be effectively addressed, recognize the caste system's
19 debilitating influence on the daily lives of millions in India
20 and encourage the Commonwealth to work with India to find new
21 approaches to this age-old problem.