

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 221

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 5, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman WAYNE P. DEANGELO

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Giblin and Assemblywoman Dunn

SYNOPSIS

Designates month of March of each year as “Irish-American Heritage Month” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/14/2021)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating the month of March of each year
2 as “Irish-American Heritage Month” in New Jersey and
3 amending P.L1997, J.R.2.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, Many Irish people emigrated from Ireland to the United
6 States in search of better economic opportunities, political and
7 religious freedom, and to escape famine, poverty, and oppression in
8 their native land; and
9 **WHEREAS**, While emigration from Ireland has occurred in every
10 period of American history, the most well- known mass emigration
11 from Ireland to the United States occurred in the mid-19th century
12 during the Great Famine, a period of mass starvation and disease in
13 Ireland that occurred due to the failure of the potato crop; and
14 **WHEREAS**, Despite often arriving destitute, Irish-Americans
15 contributed significantly to the culture and economic growth of the
16 United States by taking less desirable and often dangerous jobs,
17 such as domestic work, farming, coal mining, and the building of
18 roads, bridges, canals, and railroads; and
19 **WHEREAS**, There was a mass emigration of Irish to the United States
20 in the years prior to the Civil War and an estimated 150,000 Irish
21 immigrants served in the Union Army, with Irish units suffering
22 casualties of over 40 percent at Fredericksburg and playing a key
23 role in the defeat of Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Through hard work and determination, Americans of Irish
25 descent achieved social and occupational gains through the
26 generations and became teachers, policemen, firemen, lawyers,
27 authors, artists, business owners, athletes, soldiers, and politicians;
28 and
29 **WHEREAS**, According to the United States Census, approximately 32
30 million Americans report having Irish ancestry and 1.3 million
31 people in New Jersey claimed Irish heritage; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Notable Irish-Americans from New Jersey have influenced
33 the United States and New Jersey, such as President Grover
34 Cleveland, musician Bruce Springsteen, actors John Travolta and
35 Anne Hathaway, professor and human rights activist Edward
36 Neafsey, and United States Supreme Court Justice William J.
37 Brennan; and
38 **WHEREAS**, March is a significant month in Irish-American history and
39 culture because the feast of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of
40 Ireland, is celebrated on March 17 and the day is now recognized
41 throughout the country and State as an occasion to celebrate Irish-
42 American history and culture through parades and celebrations; and
43 **WHEREAS**, The week including March 17 is currently designated as
44 “Irish-American History and Heritage Week” in New Jersey; and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
9 *State of New Jersey:*

23 (cf: P.L.1997, J.R.2, s.1)

25 2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

28 STATEMENT

Irish-Americans often accepted difficult and dangerous jobs other Americans found undesirable, such as coal mining and the building of roads, bridges, and railroads. An estimated 150,000 Irish-Americans fought for the Union Army in the Civil War, suffering casualties of over 40 percent. Based on the hard work of the first immigrants, second, third, and fourth generations of Irish-Americans continued contributing to American economic growth and culture by becoming teachers, policemen, lawyers, artists, and

1 soldiers, among other professions. Today, approximately 32
2 million people in the United States and 1.3 million people in New
3 Jersey claim Irish ancestry.

4 The Irish are as important to the economic prosperity and culture
5 of the State of New Jersey as they are to the country as a whole.
6 Notable individuals with Irish ancestry from New Jersey include
7 President Grover Cleveland, musician Bruce Springsteen, actor
8 Anne Hathaway, and Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan,
9 among many others.

10 March is an important month to Irish-Americans because the
11 Feast of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is celebrated on
12 March 17. March 17 has become over time the day to recognize
13 Irish-American heritage, history, culture, and contributions through
14 parades and celebrations.

15 The week of March 17 is already recognized as “Irish-American
16 History and Heritage Week” in the State of New Jersey.