

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

H

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION 1458

Sponsors: Representatives Barefoot; and Goodwin.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

June 20, 2001

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF JOSEPH
2 HEWES, WILLIAM HOOPER, AND JOHN PENN, THE SIGNERS OF THE
3 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM NORTH CAROLINA ON THE
4 TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF
5 THAT HISTORIC DOCUMENT BY THE SECOND CONTINENTAL
6 CONGRESS.

7 Whereas, North Carolina elected Richard Caswell, Joseph Hewes, and
8 William Hooper as its delegates to the Second Continental Congress, which convened in
9 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 10, 1775; and

10 Whereas, John Penn replaced Richard Caswell in the North Carolina
11 delegation in September 1775; and

12 Whereas, John Penn, a talented attorney from Granville County, was a tireless
13 member of the Continental Congress, serving longer in that body than any other North
14 Carolinian during America's quest for independence; and

15 Whereas, John Penn served on fourteen committees and eight standing boards
16 of the Continental Congress; and

17 Whereas, Joseph Hewes, a respected merchant from Edenton, earned the
18 respect and admiration of his colleagues as one of the most influential members of the
19 Continental Congress; and

20 Whereas, Joseph Hewes was appointed by the Continental Congress as the
21 secretary of the Naval Board in November 1775, effectively making him the first
22 secretary of the United States Navy; and

23 Whereas, Joseph Hewes died in 1779 at the age of 49 in Philadelphia while
24 the Continental Congress was in session, and the stunned members of Congress
25 attended his funeral as a body; and

26 Whereas, William Hooper, a Harvard-educated attorney from Wilmington
27 and Hillsborough, was one of the youngest delegates in the Continental Congress; and

28 Whereas, William Hooper served on Thomas Jefferson's committee to draft a
29 Declaration of Independence; and

1 Whereas, William Hooper, Richard Henry Lee, and Patrick Henry were
2 considered the great orators of the Continental Congress; and

3 Whereas, while they served in the Continental Congress, William Hooper,
4 Joseph Hewes, and John Penn were also members of the Fourth Provincial Congress of
5 North Carolina (the forerunner of the North Carolina General Assembly); and

6 Whereas, as tensions between the American colonies and Great Britain
7 intensified in the early spring of 1776, Hooper, Hewes, and Penn sent a request from
8 Philadelphia to their colleagues in the Fourth Provincial Congress, then meeting at
9 Halifax, for instructions concerning the direction that North Carolina should take in the
10 growing rift; and

11 Whereas, the distinguished body at Halifax responded with a Resolution,
12 adopted on April 12, 1776, which read in part: "Resolved, that the delegates of this
13 colony in the Continental Congress be empowered to concur with the delegates of the
14 other colonies in declaring independence, and forming foreign alliances, reserving to
15 this colony the sole and exclusive right of forming a constitution and laws for this
16 colony"; and

17 Whereas, that Resolution was the most revolutionary official act taken by an
18 American colony to that date, and North Carolina became the first colony to issue an
19 official utterance of independence and request that her sister colonies follow suit; and

20 Whereas, when Hooper, Hewes, and Penn presented the Resolution to the
21 Continental Congress, its revolutionary language was well received, and the delegates at
22 Philadelphia sent copies home with the request that their constituents "follow this
23 laudable example"; and

24 Whereas, the defiant acts of Hooper, Hewes, and Penn at Philadelphia and the
25 other statesmen of North Carolina who took a bold stand for a free and independent
26 America bore fruit on July 4, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress approved
27 the Declaration of Independence; and

28 Whereas, on behalf of North Carolina, William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, and
29 John Penn affixed their signatures to the final draft of the Declaration of Independence
30 on August 2, 1776; and

31 Whereas, for more than five years thereafter, North Carolinians willingly
32 sacrificed their lives and property to win the independence so declared July 4, 1776, for
33 America and North Carolina; and

34 Whereas, all North Carolinians are today the beneficiaries of the courage,
35 honor, vision, and determination of William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, and John Penn and
36 the other Revolutionary-era statesmen who forged the State of North Carolina and the
37 United States of America; Now, therefore,

38 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

39 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives expresses high esteem, regard,
40 and deep appreciation for the lives, accomplishments, and leadership of William
41 Hooper, Joseph Hewes, and John Penn and acknowledges with gratitude the
42 distinguished service they provided to their State and union.

43 **SECTION 2.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.