

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

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**Simple  
Resolution  
Adopted**

**HOUSE RESOLUTION 1458  
Adopted 7/2/01**

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Sponsors: Representatives Barefoot; and Goodwin.

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

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June 20, 2001

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

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

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