

Joint Resolution Honoring Irish and Irish-American Contributions to the Founding of the United States

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper

House Sponsor:

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution honors Irish and Irish-American contributions to the founding of the United States.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ commemorates the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States by recognizing the contributions of Irish and Irish-American individuals to the American Revolutionary War effort and the signing of the Declaration of Independence;

- ▶ highlights specific Irish and Irish-American figures involved in the founding of the United States, including signers of the Declaration of Independence, military leaders, and early advocates of American independence;

- ▶ acknowledges the influence of American independence on political thought and reform movements beyond the United States, including in Ireland, and recognizes ongoing opportunities for state-level cultural and economic engagement with Ireland;

- expresses support for expanding Utah-Ireland relations and encourages joint engagement efforts, including a cooperative committee and Ireland's consideration of appointing an Honorary Consul General in Utah; and

- directs that a certified copy of the resolution be sent to specified officials and organizations in Ireland and the United States.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

WHEREAS, Saint Patrick's Day, March 17, 1776, marked the end of the eleven-month

30 Siege of Boston, when British forces evacuated the city, resulting in one of the earliest major
31 victories for the Patriot cause during the American Revolutionary War;

32 WHEREAS, General John Sullivan, an officer in the Continental Army who was named
33 Officer of the Day by General George Washington during the evacuation, was the son of Irish
34 immigrants and later served as Governor of New Hampshire, and whose brother, James
35 Sullivan, later served as Governor of Massachusetts;

36 WHEREAS, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence
37 provides an opportunity to recognize the eight signers of the declaration who were born in
38 Ireland or were of Irish descent, including Thomas McKean, who later served as President of
39 the Continental Congress, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, James Smith, George Taylor,
40 Matthew Thornton, Edward Rutledge, Thomas Lynch Jr., and George Read;

41 WHEREAS, these men came from varied social, religious, and economic backgrounds, yet
42 stood united in their efforts to establish a new republic grounded in principles of representative
43 government, liberty, and self-determination;

44 WHEREAS, the ideas and examples of American independence influenced political
45 thought and reform movements beyond the United States, including in Ireland, where later
46 generations sought greater self-government and, ultimately, the establishment of an Irish
47 republic;

48 WHEREAS, approximately 200 printed copies of the Declaration of Independence were
49 first produced in July 1776 by John Dunlap, an Irish immigrant from County Tyrone, and the
50 declaration was first published internationally in the Belfast News-Letter in Ireland;

51 WHEREAS, in January 1776, Stephen Moylan, an Irish-born aide-de-camp to General
52 George Washington, used the phrase "United States of America" in written correspondence,
53 representing one of the earliest known recorded instances of that term;

54 WHEREAS, it was reported to the British Parliament by Lord Mountjoy that, "America was
55 lost by Irish emigrants ... I am assured from the best authority, the major part of the American
56 army was composed of Irish and that the Irish language was as commonly spoken in the
57 American ranks as English, I am also informed it was their valor that determined the contest.";

58 WHEREAS, states across the United States have continued to strengthen economic and
59 cultural ties with Ireland, including through formal trade and economic development
60 initiatives, such as the establishment in 2025 of a Kentucky-Ireland Economic Development
61 Advisory Committee by executive order of the Governor of Kentucky, demonstrating ongoing
62 opportunities for state-level engagement and cooperation with Ireland; and

63 WHEREAS, the state of Utah and the Republic of Ireland seek to expand diplomatic,

64 economic, trade, and educational relationships:

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
66 commemorates the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and recognizes the
67 contributions of Irish and Irish-American individuals to the founding.

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature honors the shared history and enduring
69 relationship between the people of the United States and Ireland, rooted in common principles
70 of liberty, representative government, and national self-determination.

71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the executive branch are
72 encouraged to enter into a memorandum of agreement to establish a committee composed of
73 representatives from the business community, the Legislature, and the Governor's Office of
74 Economic Development to work with the Republic of Ireland to enhance relationships and
75 commerce.

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature calls upon the Republic of Ireland to
77 consider appointing an Honorary Consul General in Utah to further promote partnerships and
78 relationships between the state of Utah and the Republic of Ireland, including their respective
79 business leaders and peoples.

80 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a duly certified copy of this resolution be sent to
81 Senator Mark Daly, Chair of Seanad Éireann, and to the national co-chairs of the American Irish
82 State Legislators Caucus, including Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Patrick Kennedy of Rhode
83 Island, Speaker Robin Vos of Wisconsin, Assemblywoman Carol A. Murphy of New Jersey,
84 the Honorable Shannon O'Brien of Montana, Senator Ogden Driskill of Wyoming, the
85 Honorable Killian Timoney of Kentucky, Representative James Gallagher of California,
86 Senate President Pro Tempore Wayne Harper of Utah, Representative Bridget Walsh Moore of
87 Missouri, the Honorable Maureen Terry of Maine, Representative John Lawn of
88 Massachusetts, Senator Beth Mizell of Louisiana, Delegate Roger Hanshaw of West Virginia,
89 Representative Marcus Evans of Illinois, the Honorable Fran Hurley of Illinois, and
90 Representative Mia Costello of Alaska.