



SPONSOR: Sen. Townsend & Sen. Brown & Rep. Lynn
Sens. Gay, Hansen, Hocker, Lawson, Lockman,
S. McBride, Pettyjohn, Sokola, Wilson; Reps. Baumbach,
Briggs King, Dorsey Walker, Griffith, Lambert, Minor-
Brown, Mitchell, Morrison, Osienski

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 18

RECOGNIZING MARCH 18 AS NATIONAL PUBLIC DEFENSE DAY.

1 WHEREAS, on March 18, 1963, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark opinion in the case of
2 *Gideon v. Wainwright*. Clarence Earl Gideon was a Florida man convicted and incarcerated after he was refused an
3 attorney. Mr. Gideon always maintained his innocence. He was released years later after he was granted counsel by the
4 Supreme Court; and

5 WHEREAS, *Gideon v. Wainwright* established the 6th Amendment right to counsel for adults, even those who
6 could otherwise not afford an attorney; and

7 WHEREAS, the employees of the Office of Defense Services are tasked with the mission to zealously fight
8 injustice and abuses of power while guarding the human and Constitutional rights of the everyday citizen; and

9 WHEREAS, the employees of the Office of Defense Services are often the unsung heroes of our justice system,
10 making significant contributions to Delaware, including successfully arguing in *Rauf v. Delaware*, which ruled this state's
11 death penalty unconstitutional; and

12 WHEREAS, in 2015 this body passed Senate Bill 47, which established the Office of Defense Services and
13 modernized Delaware's indigent defense system; and

14 WHEREAS, the Office of Defense Services provides legal representation to any adult who cannot afford an
15 attorney and faces potential jail time, as well as to all juveniles in criminal and delinquency matters in Delaware; and

16 WHEREAS, the week of March 18 marks National Public Defense Week and the 58th anniversary of the U.S.
17 Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Gideon*.

18 NOW, THEREFORE:

19 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the House of
20 Representatives concurring therein, that the legacy and importance of the *Gideon* decision is acknowledged, the necessity
21 of providing effective counsel to all accused of a crime or an act of delinquency in Delaware is recognized, and the
22 continuing mission of the Office of Defense Services to provide legal representation to the indigent commended.

SYNOPSIS

This resolution recognizes the importance of providing effective counsel to all who are accused, commends the important role played by the Office of Defense Services in fulfilling that mission, and recognizes March 18 as National Public Defense Day.

Author: Senator Townsend