



SPONSOR: Sen. Bushweller & Sen. Ennis
Reps. Carson & Scott

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
146th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

URGING ALL DELAWAREANS TO HONOR THE MEMORY AND MOMENTIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS OF MAJOR ALLEN MCLANE, AN OFTEN OVERLOOKED DELAWARE REVOLUTIONARY WAR HERO, WITH AN APPROPRIATE MEMORIAL.

1 WHEREAS, Allen McLane of the northern Kent County village of Duck Creek Crossroads, now known as
2 Smyrna, was one of Delaware's most significant heroes of the American Revolution, whose contributions were summarized
3 by Christopher Ward in his 1941 work, *The Delaware Continentals, 1776–1783*, in this way: "There was no more active,
4 brave, and in every sense distinguished Delaware soldier in the Revolution than Captain Allen McLane... His was a dashing
5 career of personal adventure. He served Washington in many ways, and his courage, intelligence and adroitness saved
6 more than one situation of peril for some part of the American forces"; and

7 WHEREAS, McLane, born to Scottish immigrants in Philadelphia in 1746, was the son of a successful maker of
8 leather garments who was able to offer his son some of the comforts of wealth, including two years of European travel as a
9 young man; and

10 WHEREAS, upon his return to America, McLane settled in the village of Duck Creek Crossroads as the patriotic
11 cause gradually increased in fervor in the years leading up to the outbreak of the American Revolution, and the young man
12 found himself increasingly stirred by the fiery rhetoric of patriotic leaders like Virginia's Patrick Henry and the actions of
13 New England Minutemen against British Regulars at Lexington and Concord; and

14 WHEREAS, McLane volunteered for military service in Virginia in the earliest days of the struggle, and, after
15 securing a commission in 1775 as a lieutenant in a Kent County Militia regiment under General Caesar Rodney, he
16 transferred to the Continental Army under General George Washington near New York City in 1776; and

17 WHEREAS, soon thereafter, he distinguished himself at the Battle of Long Island, and then at the battles of White
18 Plains, Trenton and Princeton; and

19 WHEREAS, as a result of his performance in those battles, according to Christopher Ward [*Delaware*
20 *Continental*s, p. 527], McLane "by his good conduct and exemplary gallantry, so particularly attracted the attention of
21 General Washington as to be immediately appointed to a Captaincy in a Continental Regiment. Sent to Delaware to recruit,

22 he speedily rejoined the army with ninety-four men, raised at his own expense, every shilling of the bounty money being
23 drawn from his pocket;” and

24 WHEREAS, throughout the remainder of the war, McLane repeatedly distinguished himself with meritorious
25 service and a wide variety of situations, from conventional battles to what would today be considered special operations and
26 even, in one instance, diplomatic service of crucial importance, when he was sent by Washington as a special envoy to
27 French Admiral, Count de Grasse at Jamaica, urging him to send the French fleet post haste to the lower Chesapeake Bay to
28 support the American siege of the British army under General Cornwallis at Yorktown; and

29 WHEREAS, the success of that mission was directly related to the American victory in the Battle of Yorktown and
30 the ultimate American victory in the Revolutionary war; and

31 WHEREAS, General Washington wrote of McLane in a Certificate of Service presented to him by the general in
32 November, 1783, that “From the certificate, which Major McLane is possessed of, it appears that he was early active in the
33 cause of his country, and from the time of his joining the Continental army, I can testify, that he distinguished himself
34 highly, as a brave and enterprising officer...;” and

35 WHEREAS, following the war, in 1797, McLane was appointed by his former commander, now President George
36 Washington, to the lucrative post of Customs Collector of the Port of Wilmington; and

37 WHEREAS, in the years before his passing in 1829, McLane remained very involved in the political life of the
38 new nation, including becoming an outspoken opponent of slavery in Delaware; and

39 WHEREAS, McLane’s son, Louis, also distinguished himself in service to his state and his nation, serving as a
40 five-term Delaware Congressman, U.S. Senator and Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of State under President
41 Andrew Jackson, Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Kingdom, and President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad;

42 NOW, THEREFORE:

43 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the 146th General Assembly of the State of
44 Delaware, with the approval of the governor, that we do hereby urge all Delawareans in general, and the citizens of Smyrna
45 and Kent County, where McLane made his home, in particular, to honor the life and accomplishments of this great, but
46 under-appreciated, Delaware hero of the American Revolution.

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the citizens of the First State and of the said town and county are hereby
48 requested to consider appropriate means of honoring Major Allen McLane in a lasting way, which will serve to inform
49 future generations of his great contributions to the creation of the Delaware State and the United States of America, and that
50 their thoughts and suggestions be directed to the Delaware General Assembly and to the Smyrna Town Council and the
51 Kent County Levy Court for their consideration.

SYNOPSIS

This Senate Joint Resolution honors the memory and accomplishments of Major Allen McLane of Smyrna, a great hero of the American Revolution. It urges the citizens of the state in general and those of Smyrna and Kent County in particular to consider appropriate means of honoring McLane's memory in a lasting way and to share their thoughts and ideas with the Delaware General Assembly, the Smyrna Town Council and the Kent County Levy Court.

Author: Senator Bushweller