

As Adopted by the House

**127th General Assembly
Regular Session
2007-2008**

H. R. No. 137

Representative Book

Cosponsors: Representatives DeGeeter, Beatty, Sayre, Ujvagi, Combs, Lundy, Fende, Harwood, Dodd, Domenick, Strahorn, Letson, Barrett, Budish, Distel, Sykes, Okey, Goyal, Yates, Brown, Hagan, R., Stewart, D., Luckie, Szollosi, Williams, B., Hottinger, Gerberry, Driehaus, Dyer, Hughes, Peterson, Huffman, Coley, Webster, Carmichael, Daniels, Evans, DeWine, Stewart, J., Widener, Schlichter, Stebelton, Blessing, McGregor, J., Yuko, Adams, Batchelder, Celeste, Koziura, Raussen, Skindell, Bacon, Bolon, Boyd, Brinkman, Chandler, Collier, DeBose, Garrison, Hagan, J., Mallory, Oelslager, Schneider, Slesnick, Williams, S., Zehringer

A RESOLUTION

To declare that the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock is an artifact historically associated with the City of Portsmouth, Ohio, and to call upon officials from the Commonwealth of Kentucky to abandon Kentucky's claims of ownership to this artifact and to work with the State of Ohio to effectively preserve and care for it.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

WHEREAS, A large boulder known as the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock was retrieved from the Ohio River near Portsmouth, Ohio, in 2007. On the boulder is a carved life-size image of a human face. The rock carving, or petroglyph, was well known to early settlers in the Portsmouth area; and

WHEREAS, Historically, the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock was always either partially or completely submerged in the waters of the Ohio River, with the image of the petroglyph appearing only during periods when the Ohio River was at very low levels. In the 19th century, the residents of Portsmouth, Ohio, utilized the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock as a water gauge; and

WHEREAS, The infrequent appearance of the petroglyph during periods of low water in the river was often occasioned by great public curiosity. Throughout the 19th century, prominent Portsmouth, Ohio, residents inscribed their names on the rock, and people would come from all over the Portsmouth area to view it; and

WHEREAS, Prior to its retrieval in 2007, the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock had not been seen since the early part of the 20th century, and its existence had passed from general knowledge; and

WHEREAS, The origins of the petroglyph on the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock are not known, with

some hypothesizing that the petroglyph is of Native American origin and others theorizing that the petroglyph was created by Euro-American settlers using metal tools. There have even been legends associated with the petroglyph that thieves or robbers carved it to mark the location of ill-gotten treasure; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, historians, working with volunteer divers, located the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock in the Ohio River in sixteen feet of water, raised it, and brought it to Portsmouth, Ohio. The recovery of the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock represents the first successful underwater search for documented rock art in the Ohio River. In addition, because many prehistoric petroglyphs are disappearing due to acid rain, natural erosion, and vandalism, the recovery of the rock has likely saved the petroglyph from ruin; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Kentucky has voiced concerns about the recovery of the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock because it was located in the Ohio River allegedly within the boundaries of Kentucky. In addition, the Kentucky House of Representatives has introduced House Resolution 12 condemning the retrieval of the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock and demanding its return to the Ohio River. However, it is not clear if Kentucky officials objected to the retrieval of the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock prior to its retrieval, nor were such officials fully aware of its existence; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the House of Representatives of the 127th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, declare that the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock is and has always been inextricably linked to the history of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio, and that it represents an important facet of Ohio's historical connection to the Ohio River; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the House of Representatives of the 127th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, call upon the Commonwealth of Kentucky to abandon any claims of ownership to the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock and to work with Ohio officials to jointly care for, preserve, and educate the public about the history of the Portsmouth Indian Head Rock and, through such joint action, promote our shared and common history; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives transmit duly authenticated copies of this resolution to the Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Ohio Historical Society, the Kentucky Historical Society, and the news media of Ohio and Kentucky.