2011 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 6

April 14, 2011 – Introduced by Representatives SINICKI, RICHARDS, MASON, DANOU, MILROY, TURNER, KESSLER, TOLES, BARCA, ROYS, SEIDEL, PASCH, POPE-ROBERTS, STASKUNAS, YOUNG, GRIGSBY, E. COGGS, CLARK, BERNARD SCHABER, BEWLEY, POCAN, HINTZ, BERCEAU, MOLEPSKE JR, RINGHAND, HULSEY, ZAMARRIPA, ZEPNICK, JORGENSEN and FIELDS. Referred to Committee on Rules.

Relating to: commemorating the Bay View labor strike and massacre.

Whereas, Wisconsin workers and reformers made important contributions to the history of labor in the United States, helping to enact legislation such as Worker’s Compensation and Unemployment Insurance, models which, in turn, were adopted by other states; and

Whereas, in the 1880s workers in Milwaukee began to advocate for the eight-hour workday, which we now take for granted; and

Whereas, until that time workers generally labored at physically punishing jobs for many hours each day; and

Whereas, on May 1, 1886, a national campaign to require that all employers adopt a standard eight-hour day culminated when workers’ unions urged all American workers to cease labor until their employers met the demand; and

Whereas, in Milwaukee, civil parades and demonstrations followed as striking workers shut down factories peaceably and without violence during the first five days of May 1886; and
Whereas, the morning of May 2nd revealed the turmoil among Milwaukee’s laborers, as more than a dozen strikes had begun in the city, involving the carpenters, coal heavers, sewer diggers, iron moulders, teamsters, common laborers, and other workmen striking for better pay; and

Whereas, during this period, the good citizens of Milwaukee began to receive word of the bloody conflict in Chicago’s Haymarket Square, where police had killed demonstrators; and

Whereas, news of the bloodshed at Haymarket Square elevated tensions among the citizenry of Milwaukee and many of Milwaukee’s workers and businessmen began to prepare for armed confrontation; and

Whereas, the last grand factory to remain open was the North Chicago Railroad Rolling Mills Steel Foundry, in Bay View; and

Whereas on May 5th, a crowd of demonstrators went to the rolling mill to enjoin the workers to participate in the general strike; and

Whereas, the assemblage of striking workers was fired upon by National Guard forces, under the order of Governor Jeremiah Rusk, killing seven people and wounding four; and

Whereas, the events of that day will remain in the historic and cultural legacy of Wisconsin forever, serving as a reminder of the sacrifices our forebearers made so that we might lead happier, more prosperous lives; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved by the assembly, That** the Wisconsin state assembly commemorates this pivotal series of events and recognizes May 2nd as the anniversary of the Bay View labor strike and tragedy.

(END)