

By: Reynolds

H.C.R. No. 53

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, During a span of nearly 250 years, beginning in 1619
2 and continuing until 1865, millions of Africans and their
3 descendants were enslaved and forced into uncompensated labor in
4 the United States and the 13 American colonies that preceded the
5 founding of this nation; and

6 WHEREAS, The enslavement of Africans and their descendants
7 was constitutionally sanctioned by the final draft of the
8 Constitution of the United States of America in 1789; it was not
9 until the ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1865 that slavery
10 was legally abolished, yet the suffering of the former slaves
11 continued after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and
12 ratification of the 13th Amendment; and

13 WHEREAS, The abolition of slavery alone was not enough to set
14 the freed slaves on the path to self-sufficiency, given the fact
15 that for generations they had been systematically denied access to
16 education, property, legal rights, or any other foundation for
17 success, and even the few attempts to provide some of these
18 fundamental elements often were quickly overturned; and

19 WHEREAS, For example, the original pledge of 40 acres of land
20 to all freed slaves under the Freedman's Bureau Act of 1865 was
21 rendered obsolete in 1866 by President Andrew Johnson when he
22 returned all of the land to the pre-Civil War owners, leaving the
23 freed slaves with a broken promise and bankrupting the bureau's
24 funding; and

1 WHEREAS, The United States government has actively supported
2 initiatives to indemnify Americans who were wronged in the past; in
3 1946, the United States Congress established a tribunal to resolve
4 grievances of Native American tribes and eventually awarded them
5 reparations, and in 1988, the United States awarded Japanese
6 Americans reparations in an effort to compensate for their
7 internment in camps during World War II; and

8 WHEREAS, The movement to officially recognize the impact of
9 slavery on the American citizenry has been sustained through
10 several generations and continues to have nationwide support;
11 however, since the abolition of slavery, the United States has yet
12 to take responsibility for its role in the enslavement of Africans
13 and their descendants, and sufficient inquiry has not been made to
14 examine the institution of slavery and its lingering negative
15 effects on African American society in the United States; now,
16 therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, That the 88th Legislature of the State of Texas
18 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to pass H.R. 40
19 to establish the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation
20 Proposals for African Americans; and, be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
22 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
23 the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the
24 Senate of the United States Congress, and to all members of the
25 Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution
26 be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to
27 the Congress of the United States of America.