

1-1 By: Dutton (Senate Sponsor - Uresti) H.C.R. No. 81
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 22, 2009;
1-3 May 1, 2009, read first time and referred to Committee on
1-4 Administration; May 22, 2009, reported favorably by the following
1-5 vote: Yeas 4, Nays 0; May 22, 2009, sent to printer.)

1-6 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-7 WHEREAS, The African Americans who served in the Texas
1-8 Legislature between 1868 and 1900 and in the Constitutional
1-9 Conventions of 1868-1869 and 1875 represent a significant part of
1-10 the state's history, and it is vital that we honor their important
1-11 legacy; and

1-12 WHEREAS, Following emancipation in June 1865, Black Codes
1-13 were passed by several cities in Texas to restrict the rights of
1-14 African Americans; it was not until 1867, with the intervention of
1-15 Congress and the U.S. military, that African Americans began the
1-16 transition to freedom in earnest; and

1-17 WHEREAS, Numerous African American men went on to become
1-18 Reconstruction leaders and important members of the Republican
1-19 Party; African American delegates to the Constitutional Convention
1-20 of 1868-1869 included Stephen Curtis, Wiley W. Johnson, Ralph Long,
1-21 James McWashington, and Benjamin O. Watrous, and these individuals
1-22 played an active role in committees and in presenting significant
1-23 resolutions; the Constitutional Convention of 1875, organized by
1-24 the Democrats to undo the Constitution of 1869, had fewer African
1-25 American delegates but still involved Bird Davis, Melvin Goddin,
1-26 Lloyd Henry McCabe, and William Reynolds, among others; and

1-27 WHEREAS, George Thompson Ruby, a leading delegate to the
1-28 Constitutional Convention of 1868-1869, went on to become one of
1-29 the most influential senators in the 12th and 13th Legislatures;
1-30 Matthew Gaines and Walter E. Ripton also served as senators during
1-31 the 1870s, and Senator Walter Moses Burton represented parts of
1-32 Southeast Texas for nearly a decade; and

1-33 WHEREAS, Many other African American men were elected as
1-34 state representatives; among them were David Abner, Sr., Richard
1-35 Allen, Edward Anderson, Alexander Asberry, Houston A. P. Bassett,
1-36 Thomas Beck, Edward Brown, D. W. Burley, Silas Cotton, Goldstein
1-37 Dupree, Robert J. Evans, Jacob E. Freeman, Harriel G. Geiger,
1-38 Bedford A. Guy, Nathan H. Haller, Jeremiah J. Hamilton, William H.
1-39 Holland, Mitchell Kendall, Robert A. Kerr, Doc C. Lewis, Elias
1-40 Mayes, David Medlock, John Mitchell, Henry Moore, Robert J. Moore,
1-41 Sheppard Mullens, Edward Patton, Henry Phelps, Meshack R. Roberts,
1-42 Alonzo Sledge, Robert Lloyd Smith, Henry Sneed, James H. Stewart,
1-43 James H. Washington, Allen W. Wilder, Benjamin Franklin Williams,
1-44 Richard Williams, and George W. Wyatt; and

1-45 WHEREAS, These dedicated public servants made great strides
1-46 in education for African Americans, and they advocated tirelessly
1-47 for civil rights; by the late 1870s, however, their gains in the
1-48 political arena were threatened by a new wave of racial
1-49 intolerance; the 25th Legislature in 1897 would be the last that
1-50 included an African American member for seven decades; and

1-51 WHEREAS, A framed composite in honor of the state's early
1-52 African American political leaders hangs in the Capitol South
1-53 Lobby, but the photographs of several individuals are missing, and
1-54 thus our tribute to them remains incomplete; now, therefore, be it

1-55 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
1-56 hereby direct the State Preservation Board to initiate an effort to
1-57 obtain missing photographs of early African American political
1-58 leaders who are honored in a composite in the Capitol South Lobby;
1-59 and, be it further

1-60 RESOLVED, That the State Preservation Board be directed to
1-61 ensure that the composite is included on Capitol tours; and, be it
1-62 further

1-63 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
1-64 forwarded to the executive director of the State Preservation Board

2-1 as an expression of the sentiment of the Texas Legislature.

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