

By: Dutton

H.R. No. 808

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Three former death row inmates who have been
2 exonerated of the crimes for which they were convicted are visiting
3 the State Capitol on March 3, 2015, the Day of Innocence, in support
4 of a moratorium on executions and other related measures; and

5 WHEREAS, These individuals are among the 150 men and women in
6 the United States who have been released from death row since 1973,
7 either because their convictions were overturned and they won
8 acquittal at retrial, because the charges against them were
9 dropped, or because they were given an absolute pardon based on new
10 evidence of their innocence; and

11 WHEREAS, Sentenced to death in Mississippi in 1990, Sabrina
12 Butler appealed to the state supreme court and was granted a new
13 trial in 1995; in addition to the introduction of new testimony that
14 corroborated Ms. Butler's account of the incident, the medical
15 examiner changed his ruling in the case, and she was acquitted; now
16 married and the mother of three children, she recently published a
17 memoir, *The Sabrina Butler Story*; and

18 WHEREAS, Gary Drinkard was convicted in Alabama in 1995; in
19 2000, the state supreme court ordered a retrial on the basis of
20 prosecutorial misconduct, and the following year a second jury
21 found him innocent; his case was subsequently presented to the U.S.
22 Senate Judiciary Committee to illustrate the critical need for
23 competent legal representation for defendants facing the death
24 penalty; and

1 WHEREAS, Framed for murder, Shujaa Graham was sentenced in
2 California in 1976; the state supreme court overturned his
3 conviction because the district attorney had systematically
4 excluded African American jurors in his first trial; Mr. Graham was
5 ultimately acquitted in 1981, and since then he has played a leading
6 role in the anti-death penalty and human rights movements; and

7 WHEREAS, There is no way to restore to these individuals the
8 years they have lost, or to compensate them for the mental and
9 emotional anguish they have suffered; despite the immeasurable pain
10 they have endured, they have found the resilience to devote
11 themselves to effecting reforms in the criminal justice system, and
12 their efforts are a source of continuing inspiration to people
13 throughout this nation and beyond; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
15 Legislature hereby recognize March 3, 2015, as the Day of Innocence
16 and honor Sabrina Butler, Gary Drinkard, and Shujaa Graham for
17 their significant contributions to the debate over an issue of
18 paramount public concern.