

By: Reynolds

H.C.R. No. 150

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, During a span of nearly 250 years, beginning in 1619  
2 and continuing until 1865, approximately four million Africans and  
3 their descendants were enslaved and forced into uncompensated labor  
4 in 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 86th 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.