87S30146 CJM-D

By:  Reynolds H.C.R. No. 7

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas, 3rd Called Session, hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to pass H.R. 40 to establish the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans; and, be it further

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