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By:  Davis H.R. No. 726

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, The belief in justice for all is foundational to our democracy, yet more than 400 years after Africans were first brought to these shores in chains, Black Americans continue to struggle for full protection under the law and recognition as full human beings; and

WHEREAS, For nearly 250 years, Black Americans were enslaved; the passage of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1868 granted citizenship and equal protection under the law to all, but oppression persisted under Jim Crow laws; in the 1890s, journalist and civil rights activist Ida B. Wells decried the horrors of lynching and the failure of the nation "to put a stop to this wholesale slaughter"; almost 130 years after her call to action, Black men, women, and children are still denied the right to live safely and free from harm in their homes and communities, and the youngest African Americans are growing up as witnesses to a level of barbarous cruelty that Ida B. Wells would find all too familiar; and

WHEREAS, In contemporary America, the ease of video recording has allowed ordinary citizens to document incident after incident of horrific, often lethal violence against Black Americans; as a result, public awareness of this brutality has grown, but attempts to seek justice in these cases have exposed the deep, unhealed wounds of systemic racism and left many to ask if Black lives will ever matter in our state and in America; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated long-standing and persistent inequities in health, education, and economic security, while continual hate-fueled actions underscore the destructive impact of systemic racism and bigotry; the culture that enables white nationalism and white supremacy foments violence not only against African Americans, but also other people of color and vulnerable communities; a rise in anti-Asian rhetoric, in particular, has caused racist extremists to increasingly target Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; and

WHEREAS, The evils of oppression have taken a costly toll on our state and nation, and justice and liberty are but empty promises in a perpetual climate of hate and racial animus; although we cannot legislate away racism, we can help expose it to the light; we can adopt anti-racist policies and renew our commitment to end systemic racism, eliminate discrimination, and ensure fair and equitable treatment of people of color and members of other marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, Silence and inaction allow racism, bigotry, and violence to fester at all levels of society, and by declaring that "Black Lives Matter," we reinforce our understanding that every American, no matter their race, religion, gender, language, national origin, or sexual orientation, deserves protection from inequities in health, education, and economic opportunity, and we reaffirm that the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness belongs to each of us; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby express its support for the efforts of the Black Lives Matter movement.