

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 56

A resolution recognizing the significance of the 100th anniversary of the death of Harriet Ross Tubman.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 26, 2013

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

A resolution recognizing the significance of the 100th anniversary of the death of Harriet Ross Tubman.

Whereas Harriet Ross Tubman was born into slavery near Buckstown, Maryland, in or around the year 1820, to her parents Benjamin Ross and Harriet Green, and was named Araminta Ross;

Whereas, as a child slave, Tubman checked muskrat traps along the marshes of the Blackwater River in Dorchester County, Maryland, and later worked in the fields and forests surrounding the Brodess Plantation;

Whereas, as a teenage slave, Tubman worked as a seamstress on the Cook Plantation in Dorchester County, Maryland, and changed her name to Harriet;

Whereas, at the age of 24, Tubman married a free black man named John Tubman, though she remained a slave;

Whereas, in 1849, upon hearing news that she was to be sold to settle the debts of her late master, Tubman escaped from slavery to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, marking the first of many expeditions to and from the Eastern Shore of Maryland to lead nearly 70 slaves out of slavery;

Whereas, over the course of the next 11 years, from 1849 to 1860, Tubman became a famous conductor of the Underground Railroad, proclaiming in her later years, “I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.”;

Whereas, since the journeys to freedom by Tubman took place over the winter months when the nights were long and dark, her groups made stops along the extensive Underground Railroad, first traveling to the Quaker community of Poplar Neck in Caroline County, Maryland, eventually making stops at the homes of Quaker abolitionist Thomas Garrett in Wilmington, Delaware, and African-American abolitionist and future civil rights activist William Still in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, before final resettlement in Canada;

Whereas, in the late 1850s, Tubman began to speak before abolitionist audiences to share her dedication and unwavering commitment to the abolitionist cause and the emancipation of slaves;

Whereas Tubman drew admiration from African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, a fellow Eastern Shore native of Talbot County, Maryland, who stated, “I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have.”;

Whereas the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, located in Cincinnati, Ohio, recognizes Tubman as one the most famous conductors along the Underground Railroad and has dedicated a theater in honor of Tubman;

Whereas, in 1859, Tubman purchased a home and several acres of land in Auburn, New York, from William Henry Seward, then United States Senator from New York and future Secretary of State for President Abraham Lincoln;

Whereas Tubman attended her first Women's Rights Convention in Boston, Massachusetts in 1860, beginning a life-long commitment to the suffrage movement;

Whereas, at the start of the Civil War in 1861, Tubman believed that a Union victory would be a key stepping stone to the abolition of slavery and vowed to assist the cause, joining abolitionist Bostonians and Philadelphians who traveled to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina to provide aid to the Union war effort;

Whereas Tubman used the skills that she learned evading detection and capture on the Underground Railroad to serve as a spy and scout for the Union camp at Port Royal, South Carolina in addition to providing care to Union forces as a nurse and cook;

Whereas, in 1863, the same year that the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Tubman became the first woman to lead an armed assault during the Civil War on the Raid on Combahee Ferry;

Whereas Tubman led bands of scouts along the marshes and rivers of Port Royal, similar to those of her native Dorchester County, to map the unfamiliar territory for Colo-

nel James Montgomery, commander of the 2nd Regiment South Carolina Volunteer Infantry (African Descent);

Whereas, between June 1 and June 2, 1863, Tubman guided Colonel Montgomery and a detachment of 300 men from the 2nd Regiment South Carolina Volunteer Infantry (African Descent) through the mine-laden waters of the Combahee River in Colleton County, South Carolina, where the Union forces liberated nearly 750 slaves;

Whereas Tubman assisted the newly liberated slaves in the years following the raid and tended to wounded soldiers in the Commonwealth of Virginia before returning to Auburn, New York after the conclusion of the Civil War;

Whereas Tubman dedicated the later years of her life to promoting the women's suffrage movement, traveling to New York City, New York, Boston, Massachusetts, and Washington, District of Columbia, to speak before countless women's groups with fellow suffrage movement leaders Susan B. Anthony and Emily Howland;

Whereas, when asked if she believed women deserved the right to vote, Tubman replied, "I suffered enough to believe it.";

Whereas, in 1903, Tubman deeded her property to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Auburn, New York, to serve as a home for the "aged and indigent colored people", which opened on June 23, 1908, as the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged; and

Whereas, having lived in the home named after her, Tubman passed away on March 10, 1913, at the age of 93: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) recognizes the significance of the 100th an-
2 niversary of the death of Harriet Tubman, whose
3 dedication and unwavering commitment to serving in
4 any capacity necessary to pursue the promise of
5 American ideals and the principles of humanity con-
6 tinue to inspire all individuals who cherish freedom;

7 (2) encourages the people of the United States
8 to honor and preserve the legacy of Tubman;

9 (3) recognizes the significance of the tireless
10 work of Tubman and the other individuals who
11 bravely served to create the Underground Railroad
12 network to achieve freedom for those individuals
13 enslaved during the Antebellum Era of the United
14 States; and

15 (4) recognizes the dedication and commitment
16 of the Harriet Tubman Organization of Cambridge,
17 Maryland, and the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. and
18 the Harriet Tubman Boosters Club, both of Auburn,
19 New York, for preserving the heritage of the United
20 States and promoting the rich history of the United
21 States.

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