

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. J. RES. 67

Supporting the designation of August as “Slavery Remembrance Month”, to serve as a reminder of the evils of slavery, its continuing effects, and the freedom fighters who fought to end this horrific crime against humanity.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 3, 2025

Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. CLEAVER, Mrs. McIVER, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois) submitted the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

JOINT RESOLUTION

Supporting the designation of August as “Slavery Remembrance Month”, to serve as a reminder of the evils of slavery, its continuing effects, and the freedom fighters who fought to end this horrific crime against humanity.

Whereas this resolution may be cited as the “Original Slavery Remembrance Month Resolution”;

Whereas it was during the month of August in the year 1619, that the enslavement of African people in the American colonies destined to become the United States of America occurred;

Whereas the House of Representatives and the Senate recognize August as “Slavery Remembrance Month” and com-

memorate the lives of all enslaved people while also condemning the perpetration and perpetuation of slavery in the United States of America and across the world;

Whereas the following Members of Congress are posthumously recognized, individuals who served during and after the Reconstruction Era, as honorary cosponsors of this resolution: the Honorable Joseph Hayne Rainey (SC-01), Member of Congress from 1870 to 1879; Jefferson Franklin Long (GA-04), Member of Congress from January 1871 to March 1871; Robert Carlos De Large (SC-02), Member of Congress from 1871 to 1873; Robert Brown Elliott (SC-3), Member of Congress from 1871 to 1874; Benjamin Sterling Turner (AL-01), Member of Congress from 1871 to 1873; Josiah Thomas Walls (FL-At Large), Member of Congress from 1871 to 1876; Alonzo Jacob Ransier (SC-02), Member of Congress from 1873 to 1875; Richard Harvey Cain (SC-At Large), Member of Congress from 1873 to 1875 and 1877 to 1879; John Roy Lynch (MS-06), Member of Congress from 1873 to 1877 and 1882 to 1883; James Thomas Rapier (AL-02), Member of Congress from 1873 to 1875; Jeremiah Haralson (AL-01), Member of Congress from 1875 to 1877; John Adams Hyman (NC-02), Member of Congress from 1875 to 1877; Robert Smalls (SC-07), Member of Congress from 1875 to 1879 and 1882 to 1883 and 1884 to 1887; James Edward O'Hara (NC-02), Member of Congress from 1883 to 1887; Henry Plummer Cheatham (NC-02), Member of Congress from 1889 to 1893; John Mercer Langston (VA-04), Member of Congress from 1890 to 1891; Thomas Ezekiel Miller, Member of Congress from 1890 to 1891; George Washington Murray (SC-01), Member of Congress from 1893 to 1895 and 1896 to 1897; and

George Henry White (NC–02), Member of Congress from 1897 to 1901;

Whereas there are seminal moments in the annals of time that affect the rest of time;

Whereas, during the month of August in the year 1619, a sinful seminal moment in time occurred that invidiously sculpts and shamefully yet haunts the United States of America;

Whereas August 20, 1619, became a seminal moment in time when the first 20 enslaved Africans were brought against their will to what was then Point Comfort, now Fort Monroe, in Hampton, Virginia, and forced into chattel slavery;

Whereas all, including Africans, who captured, enslaved, and sold captives to transatlantic slave traders are condemned for their perpetration and perpetuation of the evils of enslavement;

Whereas, over the period of the Atlantic slave trade, from approximately 1526 to 1867, millions of humans were abducted and shipped from Africa, and approximately 10,700,000 arrived in the Americas as personal property;

Whereas the majority of enslaved Africans brought to British North America arrived between 1720 and 1780;

Whereas about 6 percent of African captives were sent directly to British North America;

Whereas, by 1825, in what has been called the New World, the United States included about 25 percent people of African descent;

Whereas the deadly, wicked Middle Passage from West Africa to the West Indies was dangerous and horrific for enslaved people;

Whereas mothers, fathers, children, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, as well as people from all walks of life, including artisans, traditional healers, spiritual leaders, agriculturists, artists, chefs, blacksmiths, merchants, and educators, survived the wicked Middle Passage only to suffer the evils of slavery in the Americas;

Whereas, according to some historians, about 12 percent of the enslaved people who embarked did not survive the voyage;

Whereas sharks have been said to have followed the slave ships to feed on bodies of slaves thrown overboard;

Whereas, although the enslaved sexes were separated, men, women, and children were often kept naked, packed close together, and the men were chained for long periods;

Whereas enslaved people suffered a variety of miserable and often fatal maladies as a result of being subjected to inhumane living and working conditions;

Whereas infant and child mortality rates were twice as high among enslaved children as among Southern White children;

Whereas enslaved people often worked from before sunup to after sundown, 6 to 7 days a week, often without sufficient food;

Whereas enslaved Black families lived with the perpetual, dreadful fear of separation caused by the depravity of 1 or more family members being sold;

Whereas it is estimated that approximately one-third of enslaved children in the upper Southern States of Maryland and Virginia experienced family separation through the sale of parents, including the sale of mothers or fathers away from children;

Whereas many of the enslaved, liberated enslaved, freed, and abolitionists have not received their righteous status in history as freedom fighters;

Whereas Prince Hall, a Black freedman, lived in colonial Boston, Massachusetts, circa 1735 to 1807;

Whereas Prince Hall was an ardent pioneer abolitionist, human rights activist, and freedom fighter who preceded Sojourner Truth, John Brown, Nat Turner, and Harriet Tubman during the American Revolutionary period;

Whereas, in 1775, after being denied by an all-White Masonic lodge, freedom fighter Prince Hall and 14 other free Black freedom fighters formed their own lodge;

Whereas freedom fighter Prince Hall was elected as the leader, or “Worshipful Master”, within the newly formed African Lodge #1, later renamed African Lodge No. 459;

Whereas because of this action the freedom fighter Prince Hall is also renowned as the “Father of Black Freemasonry”;

Whereas Prince Hall Freemasonry is the oldest human rights fraternity in the United States of America, predating the Nation’s founding;

Whereas Prince Hall Masons advocated for racial uplift, education, and improving the condition of Black people in America;

Whereas the freedom fighter Nat Turner was born into slavery in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1800;

Whereas Southampton County was home to many plantations, and enslaved people outnumbered free Whites;

Whereas freedom fighter Turner learned to read and write at a young age, becoming deeply religious;

Whereas freedom fighter Turner was sold to several different masters over the course of his life, the last time in 1830;

Whereas freedom fighter Turner preached to fellow enslaved people, developing a loyal following;

Whereas freedom fighter Turner began planning a revolt with a few trusted fellow enslaved men from neighboring plantations;

Whereas freedom fighter Turner led a liberation rebellion beginning in August 1831, quickly growing from a small handful of enslaved people to more than 70 enslaved and free Blacks;

Whereas the liberators went from house to house in Southampton County, freeing enslaved people;

Whereas the liberators were ultimately defeated by a State militia that had over twice their manpower, with 3 artillery companies reinforcing it;

Whereas freedom fighter Turner was captured 6 weeks after the liberation rebellion was put down, whereupon he was promptly convicted and sentenced to death;

Whereas, in retaliation for the liberation uprising, Virginia officially executed 56 Black people, with at least 100 more killed by militias through extrajudicial violence;

Whereas the liberation rebellion caused widespread panic among slaveholders throughout the South, resulting in widespread violence against defenseless enslaved people;

Whereas, in the wake of the liberation rebellion, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation making it illegal to teach enslaved or free Blacks to read and write;

Whereas the Underground Railroad was a liberation network of freedom fighters who helped around 100,000 enslaved people escape to freedom in the North;

Whereas the liberation Underground Railroad began when a freedom fighter “conductor” often posing as an enslaved person would enter a plantation and attempt to guide runaways;

Whereas liberated escapees would travel 10 to 20 miles each night between safe houses or “stations” to avoid detection, waiting in safe houses for the next freedom fighter along the line to be alerted to their presence;

Whereas freedom fighters supporting escapees at each station (many of whom were White), knew only of local efforts and not the entire liberation operation;

Whereas Harriet Tubman, born Araminta Ross, lived as an enslaved person through her young life where she endured regular whippings and suffered a traumatic head injury at the hands of an overseer enslaver, which caused narcoleptic episodes and migraines throughout her life;

Whereas freedom fighter/liberator Tubman escaped from slavery along the liberation Underground Railroad, the network of abolitionist freedom fighters who guided the liberated to the North traveling primarily at night to avoid bounty hunter enslavers;

Whereas freedom fighter Tubman returned to the South no less than 13 times to liberate 70 enslaved people, including much of her family, for which she would be given the name “Moses”;

Whereas freedom fighter Tubman deftly led those she liberated North during the fall and winter, when would-be enslaver captors would stay inside to avoid the cold;

Whereas, in freedom fighter Tubman’s own words, “I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger”;

Whereas, during the Civil War, freedom fighter Tubman served as a nurse, scout, and spy in the Union army, becoming the first woman to plan and lead a military operation in the United States, liberating 700 enslaved people in the slave State South Carolina;

Whereas, later in life, freedom fighter Tubman continued working to improve the lives of oppressed people, raising funds for and building schools and a hospital in the name of formerly enslaved people while participating in the women’s suffrage movement;

Whereas freedom fighter John Brown, a White abolitionist who ran an important stop on the liberation Underground Railroad, dedicated his life to ending slavery;

Whereas freedom fighter John Brown lead a militia in guerilla attacks on proslavery towns in Kansas, losing one of his sons in the liberation struggle;

Whereas Brown, with the help of freedom fighter Harriet Tubman, planned and organized a liberation invasion of the South to liberate all slaves;

Whereas Brown began his liberation invasion at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, but was surrounded and captured

by Federal troops led by enslaver Robert E. Lee, losing 2 more sons in the fighting;

Whereas the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified on December 6, 1865, and provides that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”;

Whereas, beginning in the 20th century, African Americans began to relocate from Southern farms to Southern cities, from the South to the Northeast, Midwest, and West, in a movement known as the “Great Migration”;

Whereas the relocation of formerly enslaved people and their descendants also included unfavorable, and at times unjust, interactions with law enforcement that often resulted in imprisonment and convict leasing;

Whereas convict leasing, slavery by another name, was a system that allowed prisons to lease imprisoned people to private entities, often corporations and plantations;

Whereas the remains of 95 persons, thought to be of African ancestry, who were subjected to the convict leasing system in the State of Texas, were discovered in 2018 at the construction site of the James Reese Career and Technical Center of the Fort Bend Independent School District in Sugar Land, Texas;

Whereas, while slavery was abolished, descendants of the enslaved continue to live with the effects of slavery’s progenies, including convict leasing, Black codes, Jim Crow laws, mass lynching, lawful segregation, police bru-

tality, mass incarceration, and institutionalized invidious discrimination (racism); and

Whereas, despite the horrors of slavery and against all odds, enslaved people became thought leaders and revolutionaries and changed the course of American history: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
 2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
 3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This resolution may be cited as the “Original Slavery
 5 Remembrance Month Resolution”.

6 **SEC. 2. SLAVERY REMEMBRANCE MONTH.**

7 That the House of Representatives and the Senate—
 8 (1) supports the annual designation of a “Slav-
 9 ery Remembrance Month” to serve as a reminder of
 10 the evils of slavery, its continuing effects, and the
 11 freedom fighters who fought to end this horrific
 12 crime against humanity;

13 (2) condemn slavery and its evil progenies, in-
 14 cluding—

15 (A) convict leasing;

16 (B) Black codes;

17 (C) Jim Crow laws;

18 (D) mass lynching;

19 (E) lawful segregation;

20 (F) police brutality;

- 1 (G) mass incarceration; and
2 (H) institutionalized invidious discrimina-
3 tion;
4 (3) encourage all to acknowledge the impor-
5 tance of slavery remembrance; and
6 (4) authorizes and requests the President to
7 issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the
8 United States to observe such month with appro-
9 priate ceremonies and activities.

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