



HR0453 Enrolled

LRB103 34799 ECR 64650 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION 453

2

WHEREAS, Slavery provided much of the revenue for the young State of Illinois and severed ties between enslaved people and their ancestors, resulting in the erasure of family histories for both enslaved people and their descendants; and

3

4

5

6

WHEREAS, The U.S. has a social responsibility and duty towards African American descendants of enslaved individuals to provide the public service of assisting Black citizens in reconnecting with their ancestral history; the State of Illinois has an equal responsibility to Black Illinoisans; and

7

8

9

10

11

WHEREAS, Although Illinois is a northern state, slavery was prevalent within its boundaries before the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and enslaved individuals still worked the salt springs of the Illinois Salines until 1825; slavery in the Illinois Salines was permitted because it provided as much as a third of the yearly revenue for the young State; indentured servitude at the salt springs continued until 1870; this history of slavery in Illinois deepens the responsibility of the State to assist African American citizens in recovering their lost history; and

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

WHEREAS, Since the first direct-to-consumer genetic ancestry test was pioneered in 2000, technological

22

1 capabilities have vastly improved, enabling refined genetic  
2 genealogy that can trace ancestral connections over the past  
3 500 years; given this advancement in technology, the U.S.,  
4 honoring its moral obligation to descendants of enslaved  
5 Africans, is now exceptionally positioned to facilitate this  
6 reconnection through a genealogy-based pilot program; and

7 WHEREAS, In addition to restoring a sense of personal  
8 belonging and ethnic identity, both being critical for  
9 psychological well-being, genetic genealogical evidence  
10 provides descendants of enslaved African Americans with robust  
11 genetic evidentiary support of their African family origins;  
12 several African countries, including Ghana, Sierra Leone,  
13 Gabon, and Eritrea have begun offering citizenship to  
14 individuals who can trace their ancestry back to their  
15 respective country, including ancestry traced through genetic  
16 genealogy; improvements in genetic genealogical technology  
17 provide new found support for the desire expressed by  
18 president Abraham Lincoln in the Emancipation Proclamation to  
19 establish a voluntary repatriation program for African  
20 descendants to return to their African ancestral homelands;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Nearly all Black Americans can successfully trace  
23 their genetic ancestry to one or more African countries;  
24 today, there are currently 42 million African American

1 descendants of those enslaved in the U.S.; the genetic  
2 analyses completed in the Genetic Consequences of the  
3 Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Americas study by Steven  
4 Micheletti and colleagues found that African Americans tend to  
5 have ancestry from four main regions in Atlantic Africa,  
6 including Nigeria, Senegambia (Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau,  
7 and Senegal), Coastal West Africa (Sierra Leone, Ghana, Côte  
8 d'Ivoire, and Liberia), and the Congo region, which includes  
9 Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; approximately  
10 71% of African American 23andMe research participants had  
11 detectable segments of DNA that are identical with current  
12 ethnolinguistic groups from all four Atlantic African regions  
13 stemming from a common ancestor; as documented by Jazlyn  
14 Mooney and her colleagues in their study On the Number of  
15 Genealogical Ancestors Tracing to the Source Groups of an  
16 Admixed Population, there is a high probability, over 97.5%,  
17 that an average African American can trace their ancestry back  
18 to at least one African ancestor from each of eight to 12  
19 generations ago culminating in an approximate total of 269  
20 African ancestors within this timeframe; and

21 WHEREAS, Approximately 15% of Black adults in the U.S.  
22 have taken consumer genetic genealogy tests; African Americans  
23 should not be economically burdened to obtain information  
24 regarding their ancestral history, which was forcibly taken  
25 from them through practices of slavery that economically

1 benefited the growing United States; and

2       WHEREAS, Reparations have been granted towards other  
3 groups residing in the U.S., yet African Americans have never  
4 been compensated to redress the racial harms enacted upon  
5 their person during times of slavery; while white slave owners  
6 were compensated for the emancipation of their slaves,  
7 enslaved individuals only had access to social support via the  
8 Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1865 and 1866, which provided basic  
9 needs including food, clothing, and shelter, due to the  
10 displacement of southerners after the Civil War; while the  
11 Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 and the Civil Liberties Act of  
12 1988 paid reparations to Japanese Americans, up to \$20,000 per  
13 survivor, and the Indian Claims Commission allocates  
14 approximately \$1,000 per person, enslaved persons of African  
15 descent and their descendants have never received monetary  
16 compensation for the atrocities committed against them prior  
17 to the abolition of slavery; this is despite there having been  
18 over 10 million African Americans human trafficked from their  
19 families and homeland only to be forced to build the  
20 infrastructure of America and generate wealth for early white  
21 Americans; in 1989, H.R. 40 was introduced to establish a  
22 commission to investigate the impacts of enslavement and to  
23 evaluate proposals for reparation; though this resolution has  
24 been introduced for decades, it has not been passed; and

1           WHEREAS, It is technologically straightforward and a moral  
2 imperative to rectify the erasure of family histories  
3 resulting from slavery; it is now possible to establish a  
4 family roots genealogy pilot program that can equip  
5 descendants of enslaved African Americans with robust genetic  
6 evidentiary support of their African family origins; Dr.  
7 LaKisha David, an assistant professor at the University of  
8 Illinois (U of I) Urbana-Champaign in the Department of  
9 Anthropology, is a distinguished expert on reuniting African  
10 Americans with long lost kin in Africa through autosomal DNA  
11 genetic testing; she is a former postdoctoral fellow of  
12 Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of Genetics and  
13 Genomics at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School  
14 of Medicine; she will be the principal investigator in  
15 establishing this genealogy-based family roots program; U of  
16 I's Department of Anthropology has expressed their commitment  
17 to these efforts and interest in ways they can continue to  
18 serve both reparative and decolonizing efforts of the State  
19 more generally; and

20           WHEREAS, The procedure will begin with the collection of  
21 saliva samples that will be processed at The Illinois Roy J.  
22 Carver Biotechnology Center, situated in Urbana, pending  
23 appropriation funding; once the processing is completed, the  
24 saliva samples will be securely destroyed; the resulting data  
25 will then be transferred to a secure storage and computing

1 environment that adheres to the Health Insurance Portability  
2 and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations; the sample  
3 will be accompanied by a unique identifying code rather than  
4 participants' personal information; nongenetic data for this  
5 project will be stored in facilities that meet requirements  
6 established by HIPAA; participants logging in will receive  
7 results that are hosted on a HIPAA-compliant platform; for the  
8 protection of all participants, DNA samples collected may not  
9 be subjected for subpoenas or accessed for any other purposes;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Researchers cannot release or use information,  
12 documents, or samples that may identify participants in any  
13 action or suit unless the participant consents; researchers  
14 also cannot provide data as evidence unless participants have  
15 agreed; this protection includes federal, state, local, civil,  
16 criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings;  
17 this does not stop participants from willingly releasing  
18 information about their involvement in this research and does  
19 not prevent participants from having access to their own  
20 information; and

21 WHEREAS, The U of I at Urbana-Champaign, established as a  
22 land-grant institution through the Morrill Act of 1862, was  
23 entrusted with a mission to democratize higher education and  
24 serve the public interest across Illinois and beyond; despite

1 this intent, U of I's historical record is marked by periods of  
2 exclusion and insufficient representation of African Americans  
3 that cast a shadow over its commitment to true inclusivity;  
4 these specialized centers, backed by the State of Illinois,  
5 hold the potential to make amends and realign with the  
6 original vision of the land-grant mission; the centers carry a  
7 paramount duty to redress past neglect, actively engage with  
8 the African American community, and to emphasize the profound  
9 need to reconnect individuals to their ancestral roots;  
10 through this initiative, the centers have an opportunity, and  
11 indeed an obligation, to play a transformative role in  
12 facilitating understanding, reconnection, and healing, and, in  
13 doing so, work towards rectifying the U of I's historical  
14 shortcomings in relation to a community with a deeply  
15 impactful, yet often sidelined, history; therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
17 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
18 we urge support for the Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program  
19 as it provides African American descendants of enslaved  
20 individuals the opportunity to trace their roots back to their  
21 ancestral homelands, to reconnect with their ancestral  
22 heritage, and to promote their well-being; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to  
24 the Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program as a symbol of our

1 esteem and respect.