



HR0453HAM002

LRB103 34799 MST 70512 a

1 AMENDMENT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 453

2 AMENDMENT NO. ____ . Amend House Resolution 453 by deleting
3 everything after the heading and inserting the following:

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

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

13 WHEREAS, Although Illinois is a northern state, slavery
14 was prevalent within its boundaries before the Northwest
15 Ordinance of 1787, and enslaved individuals still worked the

1 salt springs of the Illinois Salines until 1825; slavery in
2 the Illinois Salines was permitted because it provided as much
3 as a third of the yearly revenue for the young State;
4 indentured servitude at the salt springs continued until 1870;
5 this history of slavery in Illinois deepens the responsibility
6 of the State to assist African American citizens in recovering
7 their lost history; and

8 WHEREAS, Since the first direct-to-consumer genetic
9 ancestry test was pioneered in 2000, technological
10 capabilities have vastly improved, enabling refined genetic
11 genealogy that can trace ancestral connections over the past
12 500 years; given this advancement in technology, the U.S.,
13 honoring its moral obligation to descendants of enslaved
14 Africans, is now exceptionally positioned to facilitate this
15 reconnection through a genealogy-based pilot program; and

16 WHEREAS, In addition to restoring a sense of personal
17 belonging and ethnic identity, both being critical for
18 psychological well-being, genetic genealogical evidence
19 provides descendants of enslaved African Americans with robust
20 genetic evidentiary support of their African family origins;
21 several African countries, including Ghana, Sierra Leone,
22 Gabon, and Eritrea have begun offering citizenship to
23 individuals who can trace their ancestry back to their
24 respective country, including ancestry traced through genetic

1 genealogy; improvements in genetic genealogical technology
2 provide new found support for the desire expressed by
3 president Abraham Lincoln in the Emancipation Proclamation to
4 establish a voluntary repatriation program for African
5 descendants to return to their African ancestral homelands;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Nearly all Black Americans can successfully trace
8 their genetic ancestry to one or more African countries;
9 today, there are currently 42 million African American
10 descendants of those enslaved in the U.S.; the genetic
11 analyses completed in the Genetic Consequences of the
12 Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Americas study by Steven
13 Micheletti and colleagues found that African Americans tend to
14 have ancestry from four main regions in Atlantic Africa,
15 including Nigeria, Senegambia (Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau,
16 and Senegal), Coastal West Africa (Sierra Leone, Ghana, Côte
17 d'Ivoire, and Liberia), and the Congo region, which includes
18 Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; approximately
19 71% of African American 23andMe research participants had
20 detectable segments of DNA that are identical with current
21 ethnolinguistic groups from all four Atlantic African regions
22 stemming from a common ancestor; as documented by Jazlyn
23 Mooney and her colleagues in their study On the Number of
24 Genealogical Ancestors Tracing to the Source Groups of an
25 Admixed Population, there is a high probability, over 97.5%,

1 that an average African American can trace their ancestry back
2 to at least one African ancestor from each of eight to 12
3 generations ago culminating in an approximate total of 269
4 African ancestors within this timeframe; and

5 WHEREAS, Approximately 15% of Black adults in the U.S.
6 have taken consumer genetic genealogy tests; African Americans
7 should not be economically burdened to obtain information
8 regarding their ancestral history, which was forcibly taken
9 from them through practices of slavery that economically
10 benefited the growing United States; and

11 WHEREAS, Reparations have been granted towards other
12 groups residing in the U.S., yet African Americans have never
13 been compensated to redress the racial harms enacted upon
14 their person during times of slavery; while white slave owners
15 were compensated for the emancipation of their slaves,
16 enslaved individuals only had access to social support via the
17 Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1865 and 1866, which provided basic
18 needs including food, clothing, and shelter, due to the
19 displacement of southerners after the Civil War; while the
20 Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 and the Civil Liberties Act of
21 1988 paid reparations to Japanese Americans, up to \$20,000 per
22 survivor, and the Indian Claims Commission allocates
23 approximately \$1,000 per person, enslaved persons of African
24 descent and their descendants have never received monetary

1 compensation for the atrocities committed against them prior
2 to the abolition of slavery; this is despite there having been
3 over 10 million African Americans human trafficked from their
4 families and homeland only to be forced to build the
5 infrastructure of America and generate wealth for early white
6 Americans; in 1989, H.R. 40 was introduced to establish a
7 commission to investigate the impacts of enslavement and to
8 evaluate proposals for reparation; though this resolution has
9 been introduced for decades, it has not been passed; and

10 WHEREAS, It is technologically straightforward and a moral
11 imperative to rectify the erasure of family histories
12 resulting from slavery; it is now possible to establish a
13 family roots genealogy pilot program that can equip
14 descendants of enslaved African Americans with robust genetic
15 evidentiary support of their African family origins; Dr.
16 LaKisha David, an assistant professor at the University of
17 Illinois (U of I) Urbana-Champaign in the Department of
18 Anthropology, is a distinguished expert on reuniting African
19 Americans with long lost kin in Africa through autosomal DNA
20 genetic testing; she is a former postdoctoral fellow of
21 Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of Genetics and
22 Genomics at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School
23 of Medicine; she will be the principal investigator in
24 establishing this genealogy-based family roots program; U of
25 I's Department of Anthropology has expressed their commitment

1 to these efforts and interest in ways they can continue to
2 serve both reparative and decolonizing efforts of the State
3 more generally; and

4 WHEREAS, The procedure will begin with the collection of
5 saliva samples that will be processed at The Illinois Roy J.
6 Carver Biotechnology Center, situated in Urbana, pending
7 appropriation funding; once the processing is completed, the
8 saliva samples will be securely destroyed; the resulting data
9 will then be transferred to a secure storage and computing
10 environment that adheres to the Health Insurance Portability
11 and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations; the sample
12 will be accompanied by a unique identifying code rather than
13 participants' personal information; nongenetic data for this
14 project will be stored in facilities that meet requirements
15 established by HIPAA; participants logging in will receive
16 results that are hosted on a HIPAA-compliant platform; for the
17 protection of all participants, DNA samples collected may not
18 be subjected for subpoenas or accessed for any other purposes;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Researchers cannot release or use information,
21 documents, or samples that may identify participants in any
22 action or suit unless the participant consents; researchers
23 also cannot provide data as evidence unless participants have
24 agreed; this protection includes federal, state, local, civil,

1 criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings;
2 this does not stop participants from willingly releasing
3 information about their involvement in this research and does
4 not prevent participants from having access to their own
5 information; and

6 WHEREAS, The U of I at Urbana-Champaign, established as a
7 land-grant institution through the Morrill Act of 1862, was
8 entrusted with a mission to democratize higher education and
9 serve the public interest across Illinois and beyond; despite
10 this intent, U of I's historical record is marked by periods of
11 exclusion and insufficient representation of African Americans
12 that cast a shadow over its commitment to true inclusivity;
13 these specialized centers, backed by the State of Illinois,
14 hold the potential to make amends and realign with the
15 original vision of the land-grant mission; the centers carry a
16 paramount duty to redress past neglect, actively engage with
17 the African American community, and to emphasize the profound
18 need to reconnect individuals to their ancestral roots;
19 through this initiative, the centers have an opportunity, and
20 indeed an obligation, to play a transformative role in
21 facilitating understanding, reconnection, and healing, and, in
22 doing so, work towards rectifying the U of I's historical
23 shortcomings in relation to a community with a deeply
24 impactful, yet often sidelined, history; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 we urge support for the Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program
4 as it provides African American descendants of enslaved
5 individuals the opportunity to trace their roots back to their
6 ancestral homelands, to reconnect with their ancestral
7 heritage, and to promote their well-being; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to
9 the Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program as a symbol of our
10 esteem and respect."