



HR1011

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The import, trade, and labor of slaves in America is a sad chapter in the history of a nation founded upon the principles of freedom, equality, and justice; and

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WHEREAS, The use of slave labor undoubtedly led to profits for those who used them for manual labor; and

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WHEREAS, In addition to labor benefits, the owners of slaves benefited from selling them to the highest bidder, often separating families permanently; and

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WHEREAS, The trading, sale, and transportation of slaves, was an industry in itself; and

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WHEREAS, During their enslavement, to increase their value and extend their working lives, slaves received consistent health care and treatment for illness and injuries; and

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WHEREAS, After Emancipation and well into the century afterwards, African Americans were often denied employment, or paid less than whites for the same work; denied housing or forced to pay more for housing than whites; denied the same educational opportunities as whites; denied their right to vote by the use of literacy tests and poll taxes; and

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1           WHEREAS, After Emancipation, with little education,  
2           employment, adequate housing, and health care, the life  
3           expectancy of African Americans dropped significantly; and

4           WHEREAS, Over the course of our nation's history, many  
5           groups that have been wronged by the government have received  
6           reparations for those wrongs, including Japanese Americans,  
7           Mexican Americans, Filipino Americans, and Native Americans;  
8           and

9           WHEREAS, In 2008, the United States House of  
10          Representatives passed a non-binding resolution apologizing  
11          for slavery and acknowledging the "injustice, cruelty,  
12          brutality and inhumanity" of slavery; and in 2009 the United  
13          States Senate passed a similar resolution of apology; and

14          WHEREAS, The United Nations Working Group of Experts on  
15          People of African Descent has recently released a report  
16          recommending that reparations be paid to the descendants of  
17          African American slaves, and also recommending the  
18          establishment of a national human rights commission, and to  
19          publicly acknowledge that the trans-Atlantic slave trade was a  
20          crime against humanity; therefore, be it

21          RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, That we  
2 request President Obama to commission a study to detail the  
3 economic impact of the slave trade and the use of slave labor;  
4 and how Emancipation, while freeing them of their literal  
5 bonds, and ending an immoral practice, did not guarantee  
6 equality in education, employment, housing, and access to  
7 quality affordable health care; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That this study also include an analysis for how  
9 reparations for past harms have benefited the ethnic groups  
10 that have received them during the course of American history;  
11 and a proposal for reparations to the descendants of slaves in  
12 America, and how those reparations can help overcome obstacles  
13 that still exist today in education, employment, housing,  
14 health care, and justice; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
16 presented to President Obama.