

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 333

Recognizing the enduring cultural and historical significance of emancipation in the Nation’s capital on the anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which established the “first freed” on April 16, 1862, and celebrating passage of the District of Columbia statehood bill in the House of Representatives.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 14, 2025

Ms. NORTON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the enduring cultural and historical significance of emancipation in the Nation’s capital on the anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which established the “first freed” on April 16, 1862, and celebrating passage of the District of Columbia statehood bill in the House of Representatives.

Whereas the District of Columbia has been a focal point of the Nation’s complex racial history, which has included slavery, the Civil War, killings, segregation, and disenfranchisement, among other violations of civil and human rights;

Whereas, on April 16, 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which freed the approximately 3,100 enslaved individuals in the District of Columbia and authorized compensation to their former enslavers;

Whereas, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which established a “new birth of freedom” by legally emancipating millions of enslaved individuals in the 10 States of the Confederacy not under Union control, freeing the majority of the Nation’s enslaved individuals;

Whereas the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which reads “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. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation”, was adopted on December 6, 1865, and effectively outlawed slavery in the United States;

Whereas the enslavement of persons of African descent endured for more than two centuries in what is now the United States, including the District of Columbia;

Whereas, in 2005, District of Columbia Emancipation Day, commemorating April 16, the date of the signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, was made a legal public holiday in the District of Columbia to be celebrated annually on April 16;

Whereas the residents of the District of Columbia pay more per capita in Federal taxes than the residents of any State;

Whereas the residents of the District of Columbia, who pay the full freight of Federal taxes, serve in the United States Armed Forces, are subject to all of the requirements of citizenship, and otherwise have long made contributions to the life, culture, and leadership of the United States, still are denied voting representation in the Congress and independence from congressional interference in local matters in violation of the Nation's founding principles of no taxation without representation and consent of the governed;

Whereas, on June 26, 2020, and April 22, 2021, the House of Representatives passed the Washington, DC Admission Act, the first and the second times in history, respectively, the DC statehood bill had been passed by either chamber of Congress;

Whereas H.R. 51, the Washington, DC Admission Act, has 189 cosponsors; and

Whereas S. 51, the Washington, DC Admission Act, has 42 cosponsors: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) recognizes District of Columbia Emanci-
- 3 pation Day, marking the anniversary of the end of
- 4 slavery in the District of Columbia and symbolizing
- 5 the aspirations of the residents of the District of Co-
- 6 lumbia for the same rights and freedoms afforded to
- 7 residents of States; and

- 1 (2) calls on Congress to pass the Washington,
- 2 DC Admission Act.

