

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 62

Expressing the sense of Congress that Congress, as well as people throughout the Nation, should hold an annual commemorative event on or near August 20th to revere, honor, and remember the victims of slavery in the United States as well as to prevent slavery from ever happening again.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 18, 2023

Mr. GREEN of Texas submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that Congress, as well as people throughout the Nation, should hold an annual commemorative event on or near August 20th to revere, honor, and remember the victims of slavery in the United States as well as to prevent slavery from ever happening again.

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

Whereas the institution of slavery was a crime against humanity;

Whereas the institution of slavery, which was intrinsically inhumane and abhorrent, imposed countless years of suf-

fering on millions of innocent individuals, forever marking our Nation's past;

Whereas any attempt to minimize or rationalize the severity of slavery must be steadfastly rejected;

Whereas the abhorrent notion slavery may have been more beneficial than detrimental to those enslaved at any point in time is utterly false and harmful;

Whereas the enslaved people, regardless of their age, sex, or status, were subjected to a spectrum of brutalities and inhumanities, from relentless physical and psychological abuse to systemic dehumanization;

Whereas the forced labor endured by the enslaved was not only physically strenuous but often involved dangerous tasks, leaving the enslaved vulnerable to accidents, disease, and in many cases, resulting in premature death;

Whereas physical punishment, often extreme, was a daily reality for the enslaved, aimed not only at ensuring their submission but also at instilling fear and eroding their self-worth;

Whereas the enslaved in the United States lived under constant threat of sexual exploitation, a tool wielded to exert control and further degrade them;

Whereas one of the most heart-wrenching aspects of slavery was the forced separation of families;

Whereas the system of slavery sinisterly disregarded familial bonds between spouses, siblings, parents and their children by selling them to different enslavers;

Whereas the enslaved were stripped of their dignity, identities, cultures, and languages, by enslavers to erase their humanity;

Whereas many enslaved individuals died unnamed, unacknowledged, and unappreciated, their lives and contributions lost in the shameful shadows of the institution that dehumanized them;

Whereas White supremacy and the repercussions of slavery did not end with the abolition of the institution;

Whereas slavery has left an enduring legacy that can still be observed in various forms, including systemic racism and social inequality;

Whereas descendants of enslaved individuals continue to be impacted by the lasting effects of slavery, manifesting in disparities in health, education, and wealth accumulation;

Whereas it is critical to recognize and address the racial wealth gap, a direct product of slavery and subsequent discriminatory practices, which hampers the ability of African Americans to accumulate wealth comparable to White Americans;

Whereas future generations must be vigilant in recognizing and combating signs of racial prejudice, social inequality, as well as all other forms of invidious discrimination, exploitation, and subjugation;

Whereas the fight against contemporary progenies of slavery, such as human trafficking, must be relentless to ensure history does not repeat itself;

Whereas education and public awareness are essential tools in preventing the resurgence of practices reminiscent of slavery, emphasizing the importance of teaching the history of slavery in a truthful and comprehensive manner;

Whereas, in addition to acknowledging the atrocities committed, it is essential to remember and celebrate the strength, resilience, and contributions of the enslaved, as

well as their survival and resistance against a system designed to annihilate their identities and self-worth; and

Whereas the Nation must commit to a continuous process of reconciliation and healing, acknowledging the historical truth about slavery as well as its enduring impact, while working toward meaningful reparative justice: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring),*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

6 **SEC. 2. SLAVERY REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATIVE**
7 **EVENTS.**

8 (a) ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO HOLD EVENTS.—

9 (1) ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL.—It is the
10 sense of Congress that Congress, in consultation
11 with the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian
12 Institution, should hold an annual commemorative
13 event on an appropriate day at a location in the
14 United States Capitol Complex to revere, honor, and
15 remember the victims of slavery.

16 (2) OTHERS.—Congress encourages all people
17 of good will throughout the Nation to hold an an-
18 nual commemorative event on an appropriate day to
19 revere, honor, and remember the victims of slavery.

1 (b) LOCATION OF EVENTS.—It is the sense of Con-
 2 gress that the annual commemorative event described in
 3 this section should be held at a location that can provide
 4 an appropriate degree of solemnity and dignity for such
 5 an occasion.

6 (c) DIALOGUE OF EVENT.—It is the sense of Con-
 7 gress that the annual commemorative event described in
 8 this section should feature the dialogue recommended in
 9 section 3 or a close variation of such dialogue.

10 (d) PURPOSE.—The commemorative event described
 11 in this section is designed to serve as a memorial to the
 12 victims of slavery, to educate the public about the histor-
 13 ical reality as well as the lasting impact of slavery, and
 14 to inspire continued commitment to not only fight contem-
 15 porary racial injustice and inequality, but also to continue
 16 the struggle for reverence and justice for the enslaved
 17 whose lives were sacrificed to make America great.

18 **SEC. 3. DIALOGUE.**

19 (a) CONTENTS.—The dialogue recommended in this
 20 section is as follows:

21 “If you can, please join me by standing and
 22 placing your right hand over your heart to show
 23 heartfelt sorrow for the millions who suffered the
 24 horrors of slavery.

1 “Over the next few minutes, we will recall var-
2 ious well documented aspects of the experiences of
3 American slaves.

4 “At the end of each of these summarized expe-
5 riences I will say the words ‘we must’:

6 “Immediately after I say, ‘we must’ I would like
7 you (each of you) to, in unison, say ‘always remem-
8 ber’.

9 “Let’s begin.

10 “To prevent the evils of slavery from being re-
11 peated we must:

12 “Always remember.

13 “To commemorate the suffering and the lives
14 lost because of slavery we must:

15 “Always remember.

16 “For the first 20 enslaved Africans who arrived
17 in the British colonies at Point Comfort near what
18 is now Norfolk Virginia on August 20, 1619, we
19 must:

20 “Always remember.

21 “For the 12 million humans from all walks of
22 life whose lives were stolen from them when they
23 were kidnaped from Africa we must:

24 “Always remember.

1 “For the Africans sold into slavery by other Af-
2 ricans we must:

3 “Always remember.

4 “For the 12 percent of human beings who suf-
5 fered the deadly middle passage and did not survive
6 the horrific voyage to America we must:

7 “Always remember.

8 “For the men, women, and children on slave
9 ships, many of whom were kept naked and packed
10 close together, with many shackled and chained we
11 must:

12 “Always remember.

13 “For enslaved human beings who often worked
14 from sunup to after sundown, 6 to 7 days a week
15 often without food we must:

16 “Always remember.

17 “For the mothers and fathers who were sepa-
18 rated from their children and sold on the auction
19 blocks we must:

20 “Always remember.

21 “For the freedom fighters such as Nat Turner
22 who fought to free enslaved people; who gave their
23 lives in the fight for freedom and justice we must:

24 “Always remember.

1 “For the tens of thousands of slaves who risked
2 their lives in search of freedom on the Underground
3 Railroad we must:

4 “Always remember.

5 “For freedom fighters such as Harriet Tubman,
6 who escaped slavery and dedicated her life to return-
7 ing to the South no less than 13 times freeing
8 enslaved men women and children, we must:

9 “Always remember.

10 “For the White liberators like John Brown and
11 President Abraham Lincoln who lived and died com-
12 bating the horrific institution of slavery we must:

13 “Always remember.

14 “To commemorate the centuries of suffering,
15 the years of tears shed, the history of hearts broken,
16 the brutality of blood spilled, and the grieving over
17 lives lost because of slavery we must:

18 “Always remember.

19 “Yet, in the spirit of righteous remembrance
20 imbued with love for our country that hasn’t always
21 loved its brothers and sisters of African ancestry, we
22 have to acknowledge that:

23 “In spite of slavery and despite its invidious
24 offsprings: mass lynchings, convict leasing, Black

1 codes, lawful segregation, and institutional racism,
2 African Americans have come a laudably long way.

3 “From our arrival on slave ships to our ascen-
4 sion to judgeships,

5 “From surviving the Middle Passage to thriving
6 among the masses,

7 “From shackled in chains to creating societal
8 change,

9 “From sitting in the back of buses to owning
10 bus companies,

11 “From having no house to living in the White
12 House,

13 “From painfully picking cotton to proudly pick-
14 ing Presidents,

15 “From adult males and females being dis-
16 respectfully called boy and girl to being respectfully
17 presented as Mr. President and Madam Vice Presi-
18 dent.

19 “The truth be told, although we have come a
20 long way, we still have a way to go.

21 “In closing let us resolve that as we forge for-
22 ward we will commemorate our past and embrace
23 our destiny, always remembering the hardships peo-
24 ple of African heritage have endured in tandem with
25 the victories won in spite of the seemingly invincible

1 challenges emanating from insidious slavery and its
 2 invidious progenies!

3 “Through it all we must:

4 “Always Remember.

5 “We must:

6 “Always Remember.

7 “We must:

8 “Always Remember.

9 “If you can, I would ask that you participate in
 10 a moment of silent solemnity at noon on August
 11 20th wherever you may be.

12 “During this moment, wherever you are, place
 13 your right hand over your heart and with a moment
 14 of silent solemnity, give thought to the millions who
 15 toiled and lost their lives under slavery, and lovingly
 16 utter the phrase ‘I Remember’.”.

17 (b) RECITATION.—The dialogue set forth in sub-
 18 section (a) is to be recited by the leader of the event, ex-
 19 cept that each instance of “Always remember.” is to be
 20 recited by the audience.

