

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 368

Encouraging Americans to recognize the historical significance of
Emancipation Day to the Virgin Islands of the United States and the Nation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 5, 2023

Ms. PLASKETT (for herself and Mr. RESCHENTHALER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Encouraging Americans to recognize the historical significance of Emancipation Day to the Virgin Islands of the United States and the Nation.

Whereas, prior to July 3, 1848, many Africans were held as chattel slaves on the islands of the Danish West Indies, now the Virgin Islands of the United States;

Whereas, on July 3, 1848, enslaved people of African descent on these islands took their freedom after years of brutality and suffering;

Whereas the emancipation of enslaved Africans on these islands was a significant moment in history that marked the end of centuries of oppression, and ushered in an era of freedom, hope, and opportunity;

Whereas the emancipation of enslaved Africans on these islands is a testament to the strength and resilience of the human spirit;

Whereas the emancipation of enslaved Africans on these islands is part of the history of abolitionism and emancipation in the United States;

Whereas the United States abolished slavery on December 6, 1865, upon ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution;

Whereas the United States has a rich cultural heritage that has been furthered by its history of abolitionism and emancipation;

Whereas the Virgin Islands of the United States has made significant contributions to the cultural, economic, and social fabric of the United States, and its people have served the United States in every war and conflict since the Revolutionary War, contributed to every facet of life in the United States, and played an important role in shaping the history and identity of the Nation;

Whereas, for 175 years, Emancipation Day celebrations have been held to honor the strength of African descendants on the islands now known as the Virgin Islands of the United States, who fought valiantly for their freedom;

Whereas the recognition of July 3, 2023, as the 175th observance of the emancipation of enslaved Africans in the Virgin Islands of the United States provides an opportunity for all people of the United States to reflect on the legacy of emancipation and the struggle for justice and equality; and

Whereas the courage of the heroes of emancipation in the Virgin Islands of the United States and the United

States as a whole serves to connect Virgin Islanders and all Americans to their past, and to reinforce their unwavering commitment to preserve, protect, and defend freedom: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the House of Representatives—

3 (A) encourages Americans to recognize the
4 historical significance of Emancipation Day to
5 the Virgin Islands of the United States and the
6 Nation; and

7 (B) supports the continued celebration of
8 Emancipation Day for the American people
9 to—

10 (i) learn more about the past;

11 (ii) better understand the experiences
12 that have shaped the Nation; and

13 (iii) maintain their unwavering com-
14 mitment to preserve, protect, and defend
15 human rights and freedom; and

16 (2) it is the sense of the House of Representa-
17 tives that the celebration of the end of slavery is an
18 important and enriching part of the history and her-
19 itage of the United States.

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