

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 660

Recognizing the courageous actions of Reverend Nat Turner in his fight to abolish slavery and make the majestic words of the Jeffersonian Declaration of Independence, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”, apply to the enslaved, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 22, 2023

Mr. GREEN of Texas submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the courageous actions of Reverend Nat Turner in his fight to abolish slavery and make the majestic words of the Jeffersonian Declaration of Independence, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”, apply to the enslaved, and for other purposes.

Whereas this resolution may be cited as the original resolution recognizing the courageous actions of Reverend Nat Turner;

Whereas Reverend Nat Turner was born into slavery in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1800;

Whereas after learning to read and write at a young age, Reverend Nat Turner became a pastor who, because of his professed prophetic visions, was dubbed “The Prophet”;

Whereas at the age of 30, Reverend Nat Turner led one of the most significant rebellions in American history on August 21, 1831;

Whereas the rebellion, also known as the Southampton Insurrection, demonstrated the profound desire for freedom among enslaved persons;

Whereas in his efforts to liberate those in bondage from the crime against humanity known as slavery, Reverend Nat Turner employed controversial methods, ultimately taking the lives of more than 55 people for which he was condemned and executed;

Whereas in retaliation for the Turner rebellion to free the enslaved, militia, enslavers, and mobs murdered as many as 120 African Americans, both enslaved and free;

Whereas also in retaliation, slave State legislatures passed laws to fortify slavery by restraining rights of the enslaved to learn to read, write, and assemble;

Whereas the Turner rebellion was a harbinger of war to come between slave States and free States, the Civil War;

Whereas Reverend Nat Turner’s actions inspired other acts of resistance among enslaved human beings determined to realize the Jeffersonian unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and kindled the national debate concerning the injustices of slavery;

Whereas this debate contributed to the eventual abolition of slavery, a critical step forward toward the realization of the noble Jeffersonian ideal of all persons (enslavers and enslaved alike) being created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

Whereas this House recognizes that discussions about the freedom fighters such as Reverend Nat Turner and John Brown must consider the historic injustices and brutal conditions they were fighting against: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) honors the freedom fighter Reverend Nat
3 Turner for his courage and sacrifice in the face of
4 brutal and systemic injustice;

5 (2) recognizes the contributions of Reverend
6 Nat Turner to the eventual abolition of slavery in
7 the United States;

8 (3) encourages continued study, understanding,
9 and dialogue about the complexities of the struggle
10 for racial justice in the United States, including the
11 role of freedom fighters such as Reverend Nat Tur-
12 ner;

13 (4) reaffirms its commitment to the principles
14 of noble Jeffersonian ideal of all persons being cre-
15 ated equal and endowed by their creator with certain
16 unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty,
17 and the pursuit of happiness; and

1 (5) calls on the citizens of the United States to
2 observe a moment of reflection on Slavery Remem-
3 brance Day for all those who suffered and died in
4 the struggle against a great crime against humanity,
5 slavery.

