Chapter No. 2030
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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 52

Originated in House _____ Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING FEBRUARY 7, 2013, AS "MISSISSIPPI DAY OF FREEDOM AND ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY" AND ENCOURAGING THE CITIZENS OF MISSISSIPPI TO COMMEMORATE ITS OBSERVANCE ON FEBRUARY 7, 2015, AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER.

WHEREAS, the removal of the uncivilized and demeaning asterisk from Amendment XIII, which immobilized the progress of Mississippi until February 7, 2013, should be memorialized and celebrated by commemoratively observing February 7, 2013, as "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery"; and

WHEREAS, February 7, 2013, commemorates freedom from slavery in Mississippi, emphasizes education and achievement, and is a day for reflection and rejoicing in the African-American experience; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of February 7, 2013, as "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery" is inclusive of all races, ethnicities, religions and nationalities, in that citizens across our state join hands in acknowledging a period in our

history that has influenced our society, a great society that advances the ideals of liberty and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln bestowed the Emancipation Proclamation, one of the most valuable and imperative documents in the esteemed yet tumultuous history of the great United States of America, upon the weary and transitioning minds of the nation on January 1, 1863, to eradicate the abominable practice of slavery, which was completely abolished on December 18, 1865; and

WHEREAS, the honorable Thirty-eighth Congress of the United States, on February 1, 1865, by the required vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of both houses thereof, did propose to the legislatures of the several states an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which reads as follows:

"AMENDMENT XIII

SECTION 1. 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.

SECTION 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."; and

WHEREAS, Amendment XIII officially became a treasured part of the Constitution of the United States on December 6, 1865, when the General Assembly of the State of Georgia furnished that amendment's pivotal and extraordinary twenty-seventh ratification, there being at the time thirty-six states in the Union; and

WHEREAS, it is common for state legislatures to continue to act upon amendments to the Constitution of the United States well after those amendments have already received a sufficient number of ratifications in order to become part of that document; and

WHEREAS, with specific regard to Amendment XIII, subsequent to the Georgia General Assembly's approval, that amendment was then post-ratified by the legislatures of eight other states which were part of the Union during that era, including that of Delaware in February 1901, some thirty-five years after Amendment XIII had already been adopted, and that of Kentucky in March 1976, well over a full century after Amendment XIII had been established and cemented as part of our nation's highest law; and

WHEREAS, with respect to Amendment XIII, Mississippi, until 1995, remained the only state which was a part of the Union well before and long after Amendment XIII was proposed and ratified whose legislature denied approval of that important and vital amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, until 1995, an uninviting and repugnant asterisk existed on Amendment XIII that degraded the great State of Mississippi with the following language: "Mississippi ratified the amendment in 1995, but because the state never officially notified the Archivist of the United States, the ratification is not official."; and

WHEREAS, an inquiring and curious Dr. Ranjan Batra, a professor of neurobiology and anatomical sciences at the

University of Mississippi Medical Center, investigated Mississippi's Amendment XIII ratification history and, perceiving the asterisk meant a lack of notification to the Archivist of the United States, Batra felt compelled to immediately rectify the monumental clerical oversight; and

WHEREAS, Batra enlisted the help of his University of Mississippi Medical Center colleague, Ken Sullivan, and the two confirmed the error and alerted the Mississippi Secretary of State, Delbert Hosemann, who promptly agreed to file the required documentation with the National Archives of the United States and finally make the ratification official; and

WHEREAS, on a day that will forever be remembered in the hearts and minds of the citizens of Mississippi, February 7, 2013, Director of the Federal Register, Charles A. Barth, penned a letter with some of the most notable and sensational words in the history of Mississippi: "With this action, the State of Mississippi has ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."; and

WHEREAS, the people of present-day Mississippi, who wish to follow in the great footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, who stated, "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.", strongly condemn the unconscionable practice of slavery and firmly believe that it is fitting and proper to commemorate and observe February 7, 2013, as "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery":

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby acknowledge and observe February 7, 2013, as "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery" and encourage the State of Mississippi and its citizens to commemorate and observe its significance on February 7, 2015, and each year thereafter on that specified date.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to the Fannie Lou Hamer Civil Rights Museum Director, Helen Sims, the Governor of Mississippi, the Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Mississippi, the Secretary of State of Mississippi and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 19, 2015

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 24, 2015

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE