

House Concurrent Resolution No. 26

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1438L.031

1 **Whereas**, in 1720, Philippe Francois Renault introduced Negro slavery to Missouri
2 when he brought 500 Negroes with him from Santa Domingo to work the lead mines in the Des
3 Peres River section of what is now St. Louis and Jefferson Counties; and
4

5 **Whereas**, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 resulted in Missouri being admitted
6 as a slave state in exchange for approving the application for statehood of Maine as a free state
7 in order to resolve a dispute involving the ban on slavery in territories north of the Ohio River
8 enacted in 1787. Under the Missouri Compromise, slavery would be allowed in Missouri, but
9 slavery would no longer be allowed for any future requests for statehood north of the what would
10 become known as the Mason-Dixon Line; and
11

12 **Whereas**, in 1860, 36 counties in Missouri had 1,000 or more slaves. To keep the
13 Blacks "in their place", a series of laws, known as slave codes, were drawn up. Under the
14 territorial slave code of 1804, slaves were made personal property, and each revision of the law
15 was drafted with this precedent in mind. The State Constitution of 1820, for example, provided
16 that slaves were not to be emancipated "without the consent of their masters, or without paying
17 them, before such emancipation"; and
18

19 **Whereas**, a slave was not permitted to keep a gun in Missouri. If he was caught
20 carrying a gun, he was to receive 39 slashes and forfeit the gun. Slaves who participated in riots,
21 attended unlawful assemblies, or who were guilty of making seditious speeches, were subject to
22 whipping. Slaves guilty of conspiracy, rebellion, insurrection, and murder were put to death; and
23

24 **Whereas**, other laws further dehumanized the Blacks. Negroes or mulattoes "who
25 should commit or attempt to commit assault upon White women would be mutilated." However,
26 since a slave woman was chattel, a White man who raped her was only guilty of trespass on the
27 master's property; and
28

29 **Whereas**, in 1825, a law was passed declaring Blacks to be incompetent as
30 witnesses in legal cases involving whites; and

31

32 **Whereas**, in 1847, one of the harshest laws which further dehumanized the slave
33 was enacted. In that year, an ordinance specifically prohibited the education of Negroes was
34 passed. Anyone operating a school or teaching reading and writing to any Negro or mulatto in
35 Missouri could be punished by a fine of not less than \$500 and up to six months in jail. This law
36 was a direct result of an ever increasing conviction on the part of slave holders that literacy led
37 to rebellion; and

38

39 **Whereas**, even in death the races were generally separated. Usually there were
40 "white" and "colored" cemeteries in every area of the State; and

41

42 **Whereas**, throughout the slavery period in Missouri there were persons, Black and
43 White, who advocated the abolition of slavery both locally and nationally. These abolitionists
44 were a hated group in a slaveholding state because they threatened the continued existence of an
45 institution which provided for cheap labor. Because of their deep animosity toward persons who
46 challenged their way of life, pro-slavery forces generally dealt severely with abolitionists; and

47

48 **Whereas**, discrimination followed the Negroes into the Army during the Civil War.
49 Negroes, like Whites, were promised a bounty but not until the war was over did they receive
50 it. While White soldiers received \$13 a month, Negro soldiers were given \$10 a month. Blacks
51 were given inferior weapons and materials, inadequate medical care, and if captured, were killed
52 until Lincoln and Grant threatened to treat captured Confederate soldiers in a similar manner;
53 and

54

55 **Whereas**, in 1943, the Missouri Legislature killed a civil rights bill that would have
56 given Blacks equal access to public places, such as restaurants and theaters; and

57

58 **Whereas**, in July 2003, President George W. Bush, at his visit to Goree Island
59 (Senegal), acknowledged slavery in America as the largest migration in history, and also one of
60 the greatest crimes of history; and
61

62 **Whereas**, in his State of the Judiciary address delivered to the First Regular
63 Session of the 94th General Assembly, Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Wolff
64 acknowledged the *Dred Scott* decision as one of the greatest blemishes on judicial history; and
65

66 **Whereas**, in the *Dred Scott* case, Dred Scott, a slave who had lived in the free state
67 of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin before moving back to the slave state of Missouri,
68 had appealed to the Supreme Court in hopes of being granted his freedom. In March of 1857,
69 the United States Supreme Court declared that all blacks - slave as well as free - were not and
70 could never become citizens of the United States. Since Scott was not a citizen, he had no right
71 to sue; and
72

73 **Whereas**, European and African nations have apologized for their roles in what
74 history calls the worst holocaust of humankind, the Atlantic Slave Trade, and racial
75 reconciliation is impossible without some acknowledgment of the moral and legal injustices
76 perpetrated upon African Americans; and
77

78 **Whereas**, an apology for centuries of brutal dehumanization and injustices cannot
79 erase the past, but confession of the wrongs can speed racial healing and reconciliation and help
80 African Americans and white citizens confront the ghosts of their collective pasts together; and
81

82 **Whereas**, the story of the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, the
83 human carnage, and the dehumanizing atrocities committed during slavery should not be purged
84 from Missouri's history or discounted; moreover, the faith, perseverance, hope, and endless
85 triumphs of African Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this
86 State and the nation should be embraced, celebrated, and retold for generations to come; and
87

88 **Whereas**, the perpetual pain, distrust, and bitterness of many African Americans
89 could be assuaged and the principles espoused by the Founding Fathers would be affirmed, and
90 great strides toward unifying all Missourians and inspiring the nation to acquiesce might be
91 accomplished if the State of Missouri acknowledged and atoned for its role in the slavery of
92 Africans:

93

94 **Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the members of the House of
95 Representatives of the Ninety-fourth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate
96 concurring therein, hereby formally apologize for the State of Missouri's role in slavery.

✓