

House Concurrent Resolution No. 22

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4847L.011

1 **Whereas**, in 1720, Philippe Francois Renault introduced Negro slavery to
2 Missouri when he brought 500 Negroes with him from Santa Domingo to work the lead
3 mines in the Des 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
6 admitted as a slave state in exchange for approving the application for statehood of Maine as
7 a free state in order to resolve a dispute involving the ban on slavery in territories north of the
8 Ohio River enacted in 1787. Under the Missouri Compromise, slavery would be allowed in
9 Missouri, but slavery would no longer be allowed for any future requests for statehood north
10 of the what would become known as the Mason-Dixon Line; and
11

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

19 **Whereas**, a slave was not permitted to keep a gun in Missouri. If he was
20 caught carrying a gun, he was to receive 39 lashes and forfeit the gun. Slaves who
21 participated in riots, attended unlawful assemblies, or who were guilty of making seditious
22 speeches, were subject to whipping. Slaves guilty of conspiracy, rebellion, insurrection, and
23 murder were put to death; and
24

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

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 regarding slaves was enacted. In
33 that year, an ordinance specifically prohibited the education of Negroes was passed. Anyone
34 operating a school or teaching reading and writing to any Negro or mulatto in Missouri could
35 be punished by a fine of not less than \$500 and up to six months in jail. This law was a direct
36 result of an ever increasing conviction on the part of slave holders that literacy led to
37 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
43 and White, who advocated the abolition of slavery both locally and nationally. These
44 abolitionists were an unpopular group in a slaveholding state because they challenged the
45 continued existence of an institution which provided for cheap labor. Because of their deep
46 mistrust toward persons who challenged their way of life, pro-slavery forces generally dealt
47 severely with abolitionists; and

48

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

55

56 **Whereas**, one of the strangely forgotten Missouri Civil War era figures, John
57 Brooks Henderson of Pike County, Missouri, achieved greatness not only in the state, but
58 also in the nation as a whole. From orphan to statesman, Henderson overcame his
59 circumstances, including enduring first-hand a life of involuntary servitude, and eventually
60 authored and guided through Congress the most important addition to the United States

61 Constitution in the past 200 years - the Thirteenth Amendment which abolished slavery in the
62 United States; and

63

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

66

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

70

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

75

76 **Whereas**, in the *Dred Scott* case, Dred Scott, a slave who had lived in the free
77 state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin before moving back to the slave state of
78 Missouri, had appealed to the United States Supreme Court in hopes of being granted his
79 freedom. In March of 1857, the United States Supreme Court declared that all Blacks - slave
80 as well as free - were not and could never become citizens of the United States. Since Scott
81 was not a citizen, he had no right to sue; and

82

83 **Whereas**, European and African nations have apologized for their roles in what
84 history calls the worst holocaust of humankind, the Atlantic Slave Trade; and

85

86 **Whereas**, racial reconciliation is difficult to achieve without some
87 acknowledgment of the moral and legal injustices perpetrated upon African Americans; and

88

89 **Whereas**, an apology for over 145 years of brutal injustices that occurred in
90 Missouri cannot erase the past, but acknowledgment of the wrongs can speed racial healing

91 and reconciliation and help African Americans and White citizens confront their collective
92 pasts together; and

93

94 **Whereas**, the story of the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, the
95 human carnage, and the dehumanizing atrocities committed during slavery should not be
96 removed from Missouri's history or discounted; moreover, the efforts of abolitionists in the
97 State to end slavery, and the faith, perseverance, hope, and endless triumphs of African
98 Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this State and the nation
99 should be embraced, celebrated, and retold for generations to come; and

100

101 **Whereas**, the long-term effects of slavery for many African Americans could
102 be assuaged and the principles espoused by the Founding Fathers would be affirmed, and
103 great strides toward unifying all Missourians and inspiring the nation to acquiesce might be
104 accomplished if the State of Missouri acknowledged its role in the slavery of Africans:

105

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

✓