

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 15

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2000 Regular Session
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By: ~~Delegate Linton~~ Charles County Delegation and Delegates Benson, Bobo, Brinkley, Bronrott, Clagett, DeCarlo, Dobson, Dypski, Glassman, Kittleman, Malone, Mandel, Paige, Parrott, Riley, Shank, Snodgrass, Sophocleus, Swain, and Wood

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
House action: Adopted
Read second time: March 7, 2000

RESOLUTION NO. 15

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force to Study Establishing a Matthew
4 Henson Memorial; providing for the membership of the Task Force; providing for
5 the duties of the Task Force; ~~providing for a certain report~~ requiring the Task
6 Force to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by a certain date; and
7 generally relating to a Task Force to Study Establishing a Matthew Henson
8 Memorial.

9 WHEREAS, Matthew Henson, an African American, was born in Charles
10 County ~~in~~ on August 8, 1866; and

11 WHEREAS, At the age of 12, Matthew Henson, ~~was sent to sea where he~~
12 ~~learned~~ joined an expedition to China as a cabin boy under the tutelage of Captain
13 Childs, who taught him mathematics; and navigation, ~~how to read, and most~~
14 ~~importantly,~~ particularly how to read maps; and

15 WHEREAS, Matthew Henson and ~~Lt.~~ Robert E. Peary traveled seven times to
16 the Arctic on dangerous and difficult expeditions, and as a result ~~Mr.~~ Matthew
17 Henson became a ~~superior dogsled driver and hunter~~ an interpreter of the Inuit
18 language and an expert ~~at~~ on arctic survival, including dogsled driving and hunting;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, On April 6, 1909, ~~Lt. Peary, Matthew Henson, and four Inuit~~
21 ~~Eskimos reached the Arctic with Matthew Henson arriving well ahead of the others~~
22 ~~making him the first person to reach the North Pole~~ then Commander Robert E.

1 Peary, Matthew Henson, and four Inuits reached the North Pole, with Matthew
 2 Henson having arrived first because he was breaking trail ahead of the group; and

3 ~~WHEREAS, This significant achievement of Matthew Henson's, including his~~
 4 ~~trek~~ Although Matthew Henson trekked over 400 miles to stand at the axis top of the
 5 world, ~~went unrecognized for over 20 years due to the color of his skin~~ because of his
 6 race, he was relatively unknown in the United States; and

7 ~~WHEREAS, Eventually Matthew Henson's accomplishment was acknowledged~~
 8 ~~through the receipt of several honorary degrees and the dedication of a glacier, a~~
 9 ~~gymnasium, a middle school, a stamp, a State park, and even an oceanographic ship~~
 10 ~~after him; and~~

11 WHEREAS, Matthew Henson's accomplishment was eventually recognized in
 12 many ways, including: the receipt of a Master of Science Degree from Morgan State
 13 College and Howard University; the naming after him of three arctic locations, a bay,
 14 a cape, and a glacier; and the honoring of Commander Robert E. Peary and Matthew
 15 Henson through a State park, a number of public schools, a U.S. Navy Oceanographic
 16 ship, and a U.S. postage stamp; and

17 WHEREAS, The people of Maryland would like to recognize the magnificent
 18 contributions of Matthew Henson, a native Marylander and a co-discoverer of the
 19 North Pole, by erecting a memorial to honor him; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
 21 General Assembly and Governor establish a Task Force to Study Establishing a
 22 Matthew Henson Memorial; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Task Force be composed of:

24 (1) One member who is a representative of the Maryland Historical
 25 Trust, selected by the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust;

26 (2) One member who is a representative of the Maryland Commission on
 27 African American History and Culture, selected by the Chairman of the Commission;

28 (3) One member who is a representative of the Charles County Planning
 29 Commission, selected by the Chairman of the Commission; ~~and~~

30 (4) Four members who are citizens from Charles County who have
 31 demonstrated an interest in establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial ~~to be,~~ selected
 32 by the members of the State Senate and House of Delegates who represent any part of
 33 Charles County; and ~~be it further~~

34 (5) One member of the Matthew Henson Family, selected by the
 35 members of the State Senate and House of Delegates who represent any part of
 36 Charles County; and be it further

37 RESOLVED, That the Task Force study:

1 (1) An appropriate memorial to commemorate the achievements of
2 Matthew Henson;

3 (2) An appropriate site, within the vicinity of the birthplace of Matthew
4 Henson, for the Matthew Henson Memorial; and

5 (3) The costs associated with establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial;
6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations
8 to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to
9 the General Assembly by December 31, 2000; and be it further;

10 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
11 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
12 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
13 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.