

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23

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2001 Regular Session
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By: **Charles County Delegation**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2001

Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

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

3 FOR the purpose of extending the time for the Task Force to Study Establishing a
4 Matthew Henson Memorial to complete its study; providing for the duties of the
5 Task Force; requiring the Task Force to report to the Governor and the General
6 Assembly on or before a certain date; and generally relating to the Task Force to
7 Study Establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial.

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

10 WHEREAS, At the age of 12, Matthew Henson joined an expedition to China as
11 a cabin boy under the tutelage of Captain Childs, who taught him mathematics and
12 navigation, particularly how to read maps; and

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

17 WHEREAS, On April 6, 1909, then Commander Robert E. Peary, Matthew
18 Henson, and four Inuits reached the North Pole, with Matthew Henson having
19 arrived first because he was breaking trail ahead of the group; and

20 WHEREAS, Although Matthew Henson trekked over 400 miles to stand at the
21 axis top of the world, because of his race, he was relatively unknown in the United
22 States; and

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

1 WHEREAS, The people of Maryland would like to recognize the magnificent
2 contributions of Matthew Henson, a native Marylander and a co-discoverer of the
3 North Pole, by erecting a memorial to honor him; and

4 WHEREAS, The General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 15 during
5 the 2000 Legislative Session that created a Task Force to Study Establishing a
6 Matthew Henson Memorial, however, the task force was not able to meet and report
7 its recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State
8 Government Article, to the General Assembly; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Task
10 Force to Study Establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial shall receive extended time
11 to complete its study; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall study:

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

15 (2) An appropriate site, within a suitable location, for the Matthew
16 Henson Memorial; and

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

19 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations
20 to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to
21 the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2001; and be it further;

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