

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 15

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2000 Regular Session
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By: **Delegate Linton**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2000

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 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; and generally
6 relating to a Task Force to Study Establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial.

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

9 WHEREAS, At the age of 12, Matthew Henson, was sent to sea where he
10 learned mathematics, navigation, how to read, and most importantly, how to read
11 maps; and

12 WHEREAS, Matthew Henson and Lt. Robert E. Peary traveled seven times to
13 the Arctic on dangerous and difficult expeditions, and as a result Mr. Henson became
14 a superior dogsled driver and hunter and an expert at survival; and

15 WHEREAS, On April 6, 1909, Lt. Peary, Matthew Henson, and four Inuit
16 Eskimos reached the Arctic with Matthew Henson arriving well ahead of the others
17 making him the first person to reach the North Pole; and

18 WHEREAS, This significant achievement of Matthew Henson's, including his
19 trek over 400 miles to stand at the axis of the world, went unrecognized for over 20
20 years due to the color of his skin; and

21 WHEREAS, Eventually Matthew Henson's accomplishment was acknowledged
22 through the receipt of several honorary degrees and the dedication of a glacier, a
23 gymnasium, a middle school, a stamp, a State park, and even an oceanographic ship
24 after him; and

25 WHEREAS, The people of Maryland would like to recognize the magnificent
26 contributions of Matthew Henson, a native Marylander, by erecting a memorial to
27 honor him; now, therefore, be it

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

4 RESOLVED, That the Task Force be composed of:

5 (1) One member who is a representative of the Maryland Historical
6 Trust selected by the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust;

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

9 (3) One member who is a representative of the Charles County Planning
10 Commission selected by the Chairman of the Commission; and

11 (4) Four members who are citizens from Charles County who have
12 demonstrated an interest in establishing a Matthew Henson Memorial to be selected
13 by the members of the State Senate and House of Delegates who represent any part of
14 Charles County; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Task Force study:

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

18 (2) An appropriate site for the Matthew Henson Memorial; and

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

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

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