

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 10

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2003 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Burns, Benson, Bobo, Bronrott, C. Davis, Jones, and Nathan-Pulliam**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2003

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Apology for Slavery**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Governor of Maryland to apologize on behalf of the
4 citizens of Maryland for the State's history of slavery, its long-held silence in the
5 face of slavery, and the atrocities committed under slavery in the State; and
6 requesting the Governor to issue the apology on the 141st anniversary of the
7 issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln.

8 WHEREAS, There were slaves in Maryland from the time that the colony was
9 founded, and historians recognize that the earliest slave was brought to Maryland in
10 the 1630s; and

11 WHEREAS, A 1663 law stated that unless a black man could prove that he had
12 contracted his labor, he was presumed to be a slave in perpetuity; and

13 WHEREAS, Slaveholding grew by significant proportions in the 1690s, so that
14 while slaves made up only 3 percent of the population of the colony in 1658, their
15 numbers grew to 15 to 25 percent of the populations of the various counties in 1710;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The growth of the tobacco trade in Maryland, and Maryland's
18 resulting wealth, was heavily dependent on the importation and use of slaves; and

19 WHEREAS, Historians recognize that, among the American colonies, only
20 Virginia imported more slaves than Maryland; and

21 WHEREAS, As in other states, slaves in Maryland were whipped and grossly
22 mistreated, with large numbers of slaves forced to suffer from terrible respiratory and
23 other ailments for which they were offered little treatment; and

24 WHEREAS, Husbands and wives were torn apart and their children were
25 ripped from their families, as all were sold within the chains of slavery; and

26 WHEREAS, In the 1820s slaveholding continued to flourish in Maryland,
27 despite the efforts of abolitionists who held antislavery meetings in Baltimore and

1 Hagerstown, presented an antislavery petition to the General Assembly, and
2 convinced one Baltimore newspaper to refuse the advertisements of slave dealers; and

3 WHEREAS, Although slaveholding in Maryland began a gradual decline after
4 1810, with the slave population dropping from 111,500 in 1810 to 102,400 in 1830,
5 Marylanders still owned 87,189 slaves in 1860; and

6 WHEREAS, From 1830 on, despite this drop in the overall number of slaves,
7 Maryland remained the northernmost slaveholding state; and

8 WHEREAS, The General Assembly responded to the increasing numbers of
9 freed blacks in the 1830s by restricting the activities of blacks and establishing a
10 State board to oversee "the Removal of Coloured People", the repatriation of freed
11 blacks to Africa; and

12 WHEREAS, Militant slaveholders lobbied the General Assembly in 1860 to
13 strengthen slavery, end manumission, and forbid blacks from peddling, traveling,
14 holding their own church services, or having their own schools; and

15 WHEREAS, Baltimoreans rioted on April 19, 1861, in opposition to the
16 movement of Union troops, from Philadelphia to Washington, through the town; now,
17 therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
19 Governor of Maryland is requested to apologize on behalf of the citizens of Maryland
20 for the State's history of slavery, its long-held silence in the face of slavery, and the
21 atrocities committed under slavery in the State; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Governor is requested to issue the apology on September
23 22, 2003, the 141st anniversary of the issuance by President Abraham Lincoln of the
24 Emancipation Proclamation; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
26 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
27 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
28 the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates.