

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

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By: ~~Senators Exum, Britt, Conway, Currie, Garagiola, Gladden, Hughes,
Jones, Lawlah, and McFadden~~ McFadden, Forehand, and Frosh
Frosh, and Kelley

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2006
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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
Senate action: Adopted with floor amendments
Read second time: March 14, 2006

RESOLUTION NO. _____

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 ~~Reparations for the Enslavement of African Americans~~ Slavery in Maryland

3 FOR the purpose of ~~supporting the national request for congressional hearings and a~~
4 ~~federal commission to study and consider reparations for African Americans;~~
5 ~~and educating Americans about the history of slavery and its current~~
6 ~~repercussions~~ expressing regret for the role that Maryland played in instituting
7 and maintaining slavery and for the discrimination that was slavery's legacy.

8 ~~WHEREAS, The dehumanization and atrocities of slavery in the United States~~
9 ~~were mandated by formal laws that were codified and enshrined within the United~~
10 ~~States Constitution; and~~

11 ~~WHEREAS, The United States government has never acknowledged,~~
12 ~~apologized, or otherwise taken responsibility for its role in slavery or segregation, de~~
13 ~~jure and de facto, and has never made reparations to African Americans for the~~
14 ~~generations of labor expropriated from them, deprivation of their freedom and rights,~~
15 ~~and terrorism against them resulting in widespread injury and death; and~~

16 ~~WHEREAS, The 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in~~
17 ~~Durban, South Africa, acknowledged that the transatlantic slave trade and slavery~~
18 ~~were crimes against humanity; and~~

19 ~~WHEREAS, H.R. 40, pending before the United States House of~~
20 ~~Representatives, acknowledges the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of slavery;~~
21 ~~establishes a commission to study slavery, its subsequent racial and economic~~
22 ~~discrimination against freed slaves, and the impact of those forces on living African~~
23 ~~Americans today; and makes recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies;~~
24 ~~and~~

1 WHEREAS, H.R. 40 and the concept of reparations have been supported by
2 state and local resolutions across the country, including legislation passed in the
3 states of Louisiana and California and the city councils of Detroit, Michigan;
4 Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Evanston, Illinois; Atlanta, Georgia; Washington,
5 D.C.; Baltimore, Maryland; Inglewood, California; Dallas, Texas; Philadelphia,
6 Pennsylvania; Paterson, New Jersey; and Burlington, Vermont; and

7 WHEREAS, Numerous national, state, and local organizations, as well as
8 religious institutions, legal organizations, and labor unions have officially endorsed
9 the concept of reparations and H.R. 40; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States government has acknowledged and taken
11 responsibility for its role in the unjust internment of Japanese Americans during the
12 second World War and has undertaken to pay reparations to the internees and their
13 descendants and to apologize for the unjust abrogation of their rights; and

14 WHEREAS, The United States has lent its support to other reparations claims
15 even where such claims did not take place on United States soil; now, therefore, be it

16 ~~RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That we hereby~~
17 ~~express our support for H.R. 40 and call upon the State congressional delegation to~~
18 ~~endorse the bill and advocate for its passage in Congress; and be it further~~

19 ~~RESOLVED, That we engage in supportive activities to publicize the concept of~~
20 ~~reparations and the passage of H.R. 40; and be it further~~

21 ~~RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of~~
22 ~~Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;~~
23 ~~the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and~~
24 ~~the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and be it further~~

25 ~~RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of~~
26 ~~Legislative Services to the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., United States~~
27 ~~Representative of Michigan, author and primary sponsor of H.R. 40, 2426 Rayburn~~
28 ~~Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation:~~
29 ~~Senators Paul S. Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski, Senate Office Building,~~
30 ~~Washington, D.C. 20510; and Representatives Wayne T. Gilchrest, C. A. Dutch~~
31 ~~Ruppersberger III, Benjamin L. Cardin, Albert R. Wynn, Steny Hamilton Hoyer,~~
32 ~~Roscoe G. Bartlett, Elijah E. Cummings, and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House~~
33 ~~Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.~~

34 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland relied on slavery for 200 years; and

35 WHEREAS, To meet the needs of its economy, Maryland prior to 1808 imported
36 men, women, and children, torn from their homes in Africa and subjected to the
37 brutality of the Middle Passage; and

38 WHEREAS, Maryland citizens trafficked in human flesh until the adoption of
39 the Constitution of 1864; and

1 WHEREAS, Slavery subjected its victims to unspeakable cruelties, including
2 beatings, rape, and the forcible separation of family members from one another; and

3 WHEREAS, A native of Maryland, nurtured by the slave culture of our State,
4 wrote the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision declaring African Americans incapable
5 of citizenship because they had "no rights which the white man was bound to respect";
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Slavery fostered a climate of oppression not only for slaves and
8 their descendants but also for people of color who moved to Maryland subsequent to
9 slavery's abolition; and

10 WHEREAS, Slavery's legacy has afflicted the citizens of our State down to the
11 present; and

12 WHEREAS, Slavery and discrimination are utterly contrary to the principles
13 that this Nation and this State profess; and

14 WHEREAS, It is time for the State of Maryland to acknowledge the role the
15 State played in maintaining the institution of slavery and its attendant evils; now,
16 therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the State
18 of Maryland expresses profound regret for the role that Maryland played in
19 instituting and maintaining slavery and for the discrimination that was slavery's
20 legacy; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland commits itself to the formation of a
22 more perfect union among its citizens regardless of color, creed, or race; and be it
23 further

24 RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland recommits itself to the principle that
25 all people are equal and equally endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and
26 the pursuit of happiness.