

JOINT RESOLUTION 2

(House Joint Resolution 4)

A House Joint Resolution concerning

Slavery in Maryland

FOR the purpose of expressing regret for the role that Maryland played in instituting and maintaining slavery and for the discrimination that was slavery's legacy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland recommitts itself to the principle that all people ~~are equal and equally endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.~~ “are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Signed by the President and the Speaker, May 8, 2007.