

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

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(PRE-FILED)

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By: **Delegate Bagnall**

Requested: October 28, 2024

Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2025

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Witchcraft – Exoneration**

3 FOR the purpose of exonerating those accused, tried, or convicted of witchcraft in the  
4 Province of Maryland prior to the American Revolution; and generally relating to the  
5 exoneration of historical convictions.

6 WHEREAS, At least seven individuals were accused of or indicted for the crime of  
7 witchcraft, at least two individuals were convicted, and at least one individual was executed  
8 in the Province of Maryland prior to the American Revolution; and

9 WHEREAS, It is now accepted by historians and society as a whole that the accused  
10 and convicted individuals were innocent of such accusations and charges, and that their  
11 persecution was the result of community strife and panic, combined with overwhelming  
12 fear and superstition; and

13 WHEREAS, Legal procedures and protections differed prior to the adoption of the  
14 U.S. Constitution and many historical practices of courts at that time would not meet  
15 modern standards of due process and proof, leading to the prosecutions and subsequent  
16 miscarriage of justice; and

17 WHEREAS, The historical status of women was radically different than it is today,  
18 and misogyny played a large part in the trial of supposed witches and in denying defendants  
19 their rights and dignity; now, therefore, be it

20 **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND**, That individuals  
21 formally convicted or executed for practicing witchcraft are exonerated of all crimes relating  
22 to charges of witchcraft; and be it further

23 **RESOLVED**, That those who were indicted, forced to flee, banished, or acquitted who  
24 continued to live with their reputations destroyed and their family names tarnished will



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1 have their reputations restored and no longer have disgrace attached to their names, now  
2 being in good standing in Maryland; and be it further

3           RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland apologizes to the descendants of those  
4 individuals who were indicted, convicted, or executed under the government of the Province  
5 of Maryland, and for the harm inflicted on the family and descendants of the persecuted  
6 individuals; and be it further

7           RESOLVED, That the State of Maryland acknowledges the trauma and shame that  
8 wrongfully continued to affect the families of the accused; and be it further

9           RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of  
10 Legislative Services to the Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland; the Honorable  
11 William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; and the Honorable Adrienne  
12 A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates.