

By: Representative West

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 137

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO BE KNOWN AS THE MISSISSIPPI
2 FORKS-OF-THE-ROAD EQUAL HUMAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMEMORATIONS
3 RESOLUTION OF 2003, TO PERMANENTLY CORRECT THE HISTORICAL AND
4 CONTEMPORARY PREJUDICIAL EXPENDITURES OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN THE STATE
5 OF MISSISSIPPI THAT HIGHLIGHT, PRESERVE, PRESENT AND INTERPRET
6 EUROPEAN AND EUROPEAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL ANTEBELLUM PRESENCE,
7 HUMANITY, HISTORY, HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEGACIES, ART, LIFE AND
8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS BY GOVERNMENTS,
9 QUASI-GOVERNMENTS, SCHOOLS, CHURCHES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN
10 WAYS, STRUCTURES, FORMS AND MANNERS THAT CREATE AN APPEARANCE TO
11 THE PUBLIC THAT EUROPEANS AND EUROPEAN AMERICANS WERE THE ONLY
12 PERSONS WHO HISTORICALLY CONTRIBUTED THOSE DEVELOPMENTS IN
13 MISSISSIPPI AND THE "OLD NATCHEZ DISTRICT."

14 WHEREAS, the historical antebellum presence, humanity,
15 history, heritage, culture, legacies, art, life and community
16 development contributions of enslaved Africans and African
17 Americans sold at Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads and other
18 enslavement markets, and those of non-enslaved Africans and
19 African Americans in Mississippi, are omitted, deleted, denied and
20 are not adequately and sufficiently highlighted, preserved,
21 presented and interpreted in Southwest Mississippi by governments,
22 quasi-governments, schools, churches, and the private sector,
23 while at the same time European and European American historical
24 antebellum presence, humanity, history, heritage, culture,
25 legacies, art, life and community development contributions are
26 publicly and more than adequately and sufficiently highlighted,
27 preserved, presented and interpreted by governments,
28 quasi-governments, schools, churches and the private sector in
29 ways, structures, forms and manners that create an appearance to
30 the public that Europeans and European Americans were the only
31 persons who historically have made developments in Mississippi and
32 the "Old Natchez District"; and



33 WHEREAS, the omission, deletion and denial of the historical
34 antebellum presence, humanity, history, heritage, culture,
35 legacies, art, life and community development contributions of
36 enslaved Africans, African Americans and those of non-enslaved
37 Africans and African Americans in Mississippi, seriously and
38 injuriously restricts the ability of the people of Mississippi,
39 the United States and those from abroad, particularly Africans and
40 African Americans, to understand themselves and their past; and

41 WHEREAS, the omission, deletion and denial of the historical
42 antebellum presence, humanity, history, heritage, culture,
43 legacies, art, life and community development contributions of
44 enslaved Africans and African Americans, and those of non-enslaved
45 Africans and African Americans in Mississippi, seriously and
46 injuriously restrict the ability of the people of Mississippi, the
47 United States and those from abroad, particularly Africans and
48 African Americans to view Mississippi as part of a "New South"
49 that has come of age by facing up to its past denial of human and
50 civil rights; and

51 WHEREAS, antebellum Africans' and African Americans'
52 historical presence, humanity, history, heritage, culture,
53 legacies, art, life and community development contributions
54 expressly include the varied experiences of Africans in
55 enslavement and their various means and ways of seeking freedom,
56 not limited to running away, escaping through the Underground
57 Railroad, revolts, maroonage, Civil War self-emancipation, and the
58 continued struggle of their descendants for full civil and human
59 rights benefits guaranteed by the United States Constitution and
60 United Nations Human Rights Charter; and

61 WHEREAS, from the 1700s until the Civil War, literally
62 thousands of Africans and African Americans were "sold down the
63 river," forced to walk overland on the Overground Railroad in
64 captivity from Maryland, Washington, D.C., Virginia, South and
65 North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Missouri, Kentucky and



66 Tennessee, and shipped from the Caribbean and Africa along the
67 Mississippi River to Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement
68 Market at Natchez and other enslavement markets, where they were
69 sold into racial chattel enslavement intended for life; and

70 WHEREAS, those enslaved humans in captivity who were sold at
71 Mississippi's Forks-of-the Roads Enslavement Market at Natchez and
72 other enslavement markets, and other non-enslaved Africans and
73 African Americans in Mississippi, were the foreparents and
74 ancestors of most Africans in America and to a large extent
75 account for the subsequent African American "Great Migration" up
76 north and out west; and

77 WHEREAS, those enslaved humans in captivity sold at
78 Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Markets at Natchez
79 and other enslavement markets, and other non-enslaved Africans and
80 African Americans in Mississippi, provided the work and the skill
81 that built the "king cotton" economy and infrastructures, which
82 generated the life styles of wealth, governments, schools,
83 churches and "southern" culture of Mississippi and the emerging
84 wealth and culture of the United States and industrial Europe, as
85 we historically know these places today; and

86 WHEREAS, without the skills and abilities of thousands of
87 enslaved Africans and African Americans, and other non-enslaved
88 Africans and African Americans in Mississippi, Mississippi would
89 not have been developed into the existence as we know it today, in
90 at least the following areas: scientific, economical,
91 agricultural, social, organizational, artistic, metallurgical,
92 cosmological, spiritual, medicinal, culinary, hunting and
93 gathering, fishing, construction, engineering, irrigation, stone
94 masonry, material crafting, weaving, family rearing and
95 development, animal husbandry, mining, smithery, music, dance,
96 song, survival tenacity and adaptability; and

97 WHEREAS, governments, quasi-governments, schools, churches
98 and the private sector in Southwest Mississippi, particularly in



99 Natchez, have developed an extensive tourism industry that
100 showcases the extant antebellum homes, plantation estates,
101 monuments, cemeteries, street names, ceremonies, bluff
102 stabilization and other edifices that have been preserved, are
103 being preserved or planned to be preserved and are presented and
104 interpreted in ways, structures, forms and manners that glorify
105 the "Gone with the Wind" era of enslavement economics and culture,
106 Civil War lost cause and "white culture," while at the same time
107 they have failed and refused to adequately and satisfactorily
108 preserve, present and develop the interpretation of the story of
109 enslavery, thus continuing their pattern of racial history,
110 tourism injustice and discrimination, by the continued omission,
111 deletion and denial of the historical antebellum presence,
112 humanity, history, heritage, culture, legacies, art, life and
113 community development contributions of enslaved Africans and
114 African Americans, and those of non-enslaved Africans and African
115 Americans in Mississippi; and

116 WHEREAS, the racial history, tourism injustice,
117 discrimination and human and civil rights denial seriously and
118 injuriously restricts the ability of the people of Mississippi,
119 the United States and those from abroad, particularly Africans and
120 African Americans, to view Mississippi as part of a "New South"
121 that has come of age by facing up to its infamous human and civil
122 rights past; and

123 WHEREAS, observant tourists, visitors and concerned persons
124 and organizations point out such obvious omissions, deletions and
125 denials of the historical antebellum presence, humanity, history,
126 heritage, culture, legacies, art, life and community developmental
127 contributions of enslaved Africans and African Americans, and
128 those of non-enslaved Africans and African-Americans in
129 Mississippi, that account for Mississippi's unfinished civil
130 rights agenda and racial preservation history discrimination,
131 tourism injustice and human rights denial, taint the progressive



132 image of Mississippi by seriously and injuriously restricting the
133 ability of the people of Mississippi, the United States and those
134 from abroad, particularly Africans and African Americans, to view
135 Mississippi as part of a "New South" that has come of age by
136 facing up to its infamous human and civil rights pasts; and

137 WHEREAS, there are no African or African American national
138 historical landmarks designated by the United States Department of
139 Interior National Park Service among the 70 such National
140 Historical Landmarks in Mississippi, including seven in Natchez;
141 and

142 WHEREAS, Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Market
143 Sites in Natchez is the only historical site in the state that
144 explains the comprehensive and collective contributions of
145 Africans and African Americans to the historical developments of
146 not only Mississippi and the "Old Natchez District," but also the
147 historical developments of Central Louisiana, East Texas, Alabama
148 and Arkansas and the continuing presence and migratory
149 contributions of Africans and African Americans; and

150 WHEREAS, Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Market
151 Sites Crossroads Juncture is an above ground artifact in Natchez
152 that explains the historical gateway connections between the Upper
153 Old South's and Mid-West's exporting enslavement states and land
154 migratory routes of Europeans and European Americans to the Old
155 Southwest, especially the connections to the Natchez Trace; and

156 WHEREAS, Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Market
157 Sites in Natchez was the Deep South selling headquarters
158 established by Franklin & Armfield Long Distance Enslavement
159 Trafficking Company, which was once the largest kingpin domestic
160 enslavement dealers in the United States, whose eastern buying
161 headquarters was 1315 Duke Street in Alexandria, Virginia, which
162 is now a national historical landmark and the corporate office of
163 the National Urban League of Northern Virginians; and



164 WHEREAS, Mississippi's Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Market
165 Sites in Natchez exists on the positive side of freedom, justice,
166 civil and human rights and explains the Run Away Freedom Summer of
167 1863's self-emancipation of thousands upon thousands of enslaved
168 Africans and African Americans in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama,
169 Tennessee, Texas, Arkansas and the "Old Natchez District," who ran
170 away from enslavement captivity to emancipation proclamation
171 freedom behind Union Army lines, and then many able bodied men,
172 women and children, including Mississippi's famous author Richard
173 Wright's grandfather, were stationed as Union Army freedom
174 fighters soldiers and "Contraband" workers at the
175 Forks-of-the-Roads and other locations in Mississippi; and

176 WHEREAS, the Southwest Mississippi-Central Louisiana
177 Underground Railroad Association and a host of supporters have
178 been and are aggressively seeking to have Mississippi's
179 Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Market Sites and adjacent lands in
180 Natchez be purchased by any means and brought under public domain,
181 thereby immediately mitigating over 300 years of omissions,
182 deletions and denials of the historical antebellum presence,
183 humanity, history, heritage, culture, legacies, art, life and
184 community development contributions of enslaved Africans and
185 African Americans, and those of non-enslaved Africans and African
186 Americans in Mississippi, which seriously and injuriously restrict
187 the ability of the people of Mississippi, the United States and
188 those from abroad, particularly Africans and African Americans, to
189 view Mississippi as part of a "New South" that has come of age by
190 facing up to its denial of human and civil rights past by now
191 adequately and sufficiently highlighting, preserving, presenting
192 and interpreting in Southwest Mississippi, those African and
193 African American contributions through governments,
194 quasi-governments, schools, churches and private sectors by using
195 present and future federal funds given to Mississippi and



196 Mississippi public and local level funds raised through bond
197 issues allowed under state statues; and

198 WHEREAS, the Forks-of-the-Roads juncture streets of St.
199 Catherine Street, Liberty Roads and D'Everaux Street West
200 (formerly Washington Road) are formally and officially included in
201 the National Park Service Southeast Region National Underground
202 Railroad Network to Freedom Program (authorized by the United
203 States Congress in 1988), website: www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr, and that
204 juncture was designated as a "Millennium Trail," called Natchez
205 Trace's Forks-of-the-Roads Hub Millennium Trail by former First
206 Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's White House Millennium Council in
207 2000, and the Forks-of-the-Roads Enslavement Market Sites was
208 nominated for a historical landmark designation by the Mississippi
209 Department of Archives and History Director at Natchez and the
210 Mississippi Department of Archives and History awarded \$200,000.00
211 from funds provided by the Mississippi State Legislature to the
212 City of Natchez to purchase the historical antebellum enslavement
213 market sites at the Forks; and

214 WHEREAS, Governor Ronnie Musgrove proclaimed the month of
215 April 2002 as "Confederate Heritage Month in Mississippi" and the
216 main clause in the proclamation reads: "It is important for all
217 Americans to reflect upon our nation's past, to gain insight from
218 our mistakes and successes, and to come to a full understanding
219 that the lessons learned yesterday and today will carry us through
220 tomorrow if we carefully and earnestly strive to understand and
221 appreciate our heritage and our opportunities which lie before
222 us." :

223 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
224 THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That the
225 Mississippi Legislature recognizes and declares the need to
226 permanently correct the historical and contemporary prejudicial
227 expenditures of public funds in the State of Mississippi that
228 highlight, preserve, present and interpret European and European



229 American historical antebellum presence, humanity, history,
230 heritage, culture, legacies, art, life and community development
231 contributions by governments, quasi-governments, schools, churches
232 and the private sector in ways, structures, forms and manners that
233 create an appearance to the public that Europeans and European
234 Americans were the only persons who historically contributed to
235 those developments in Mississippi and the "Old Natchez District";
236 and

237 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution may be cited as
238 the "Mississippi Forks-of-the-Roads Equal Human Civil Rights
239 Commemorations Resolution of 2003."

240 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
241 furnished to the Southwest Mississippi-Central Louisiana
242 Underground Railroad Association, the Fort McPherson/Forks of Road
243 Chapter of Sons and Daughters of U.S. Colored Troops, the friends
244 and supporters of balance history and tourism justice in
245 Mississippi and Mississippians for Mississippi coming of age as
246 part of the "New South."

