

By: Representative Straughter

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING FEBRUARY 7, 2013, AS
2 "MISSISSIPPI DAY OF FREEDOM AND ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY" AND
3 ENCOURAGING THE CITIZENS OF MISSISSIPPI TO COMMEMORATE ITS
4 OBSERVANCE ON FEBRUARY 7, 2015, AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER.

5 WHEREAS, the removal of the uncivilized and demeaning
6 asterisk from Amendment XIII, which immobilized the progress of
7 Mississippi until February 7, 2013, should be memorialized and
8 celebrated by commemoratively observing February 7, 2013, as
9 "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery"; and

10 WHEREAS, February 7, 2013, commemorates freedom from slavery
11 in Mississippi, emphasizes education and achievement, and is a day
12 for reflection and rejoicing in the African-American experience;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the celebration of February 7, 2013, as "Mississippi
15 Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery" is inclusive of all
16 races, ethnicities, religions and nationalities, in that citizens
17 across our state join hands in acknowledging a period in our
18 history that has influenced our society, a great society that
19 advances the ideals of liberty and justice for all; and



20 WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln bestowed the Emancipation
21 Proclamation, one of the most valuable and imperative documents in
22 the esteemed yet tumultuous history of the great United States of
23 America, upon the weary and transitioning minds of the nation on
24 January 1, 1863, to eradicate the abominable practice of slavery,
25 which was completely abolished on December 18, 1865; and

26 WHEREAS, the honorable Thirty-eighth Congress of the United
27 States, on February 1, 1865, by the required vote of two-thirds
28 (2/3) of the membership of both houses thereof, did propose to the
29 legislatures of the several states an amendment to the
30 Constitution of the United States which reads as follows:

31 "AMENDMENT XIII

32 **SECTION 1.** Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except
33 as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly
34 convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place
35 subject to their jurisdiction.

36 **SECTION 2.** Congress shall have power to enforce this article
37 by appropriate legislation."; and

38 WHEREAS, Amendment XIII officially became a treasured part of
39 the Constitution of the United States on December 6, 1865, when
40 the General Assembly of the State of Georgia furnished that
41 amendment's pivotal and extraordinary twenty-seventh ratification,
42 there being at the time thirty-six states in the Union; and

43 WHEREAS, it is common for state legislatures to continue to
44 act upon amendments to the Constitution of the United States well



45 after those amendments have already received a sufficient number
46 of ratifications in order to become part of that document; and

47 WHEREAS, with specific regard to Amendment XIII, subsequent
48 to the Georgia General Assembly's approval, that amendment was
49 then post-ratified by the legislatures of eight other states which
50 were part of the Union during that era, including that of Delaware
51 in February 1901, some thirty-five years after Amendment XIII had
52 already been adopted, and that of Kentucky in March 1976, well
53 over a full century after Amendment XIII had been established and
54 cemented as part of our nation's highest law; and

55 WHEREAS, with respect to Amendment XIII, Mississippi, until
56 1995, remained the only state which was a part of the Union well
57 before and long after Amendment XIII was proposed and ratified
58 whose legislature denied approval of that important and vital
59 amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and

60 WHEREAS, until 1995, an uninviting and repugnant asterisk
61 existed on Amendment XIII that degraded the great State of
62 Mississippi with the following language: "Mississippi ratified
63 the amendment in 1995, but because the state never officially
64 notified the Archivist of the United States, the ratification is
65 not official."; and

66 WHEREAS, an inquiring and curious Dr. Ranjan Batra, a
67 professor of neurobiology and anatomical sciences at the
68 University of Mississippi Medical Center, investigated
69 Mississippi's Amendment XIII ratification history and, perceiving



70 the asterisk meant a lack of notification to the Archivist of the
71 United States, Batra felt compelled to immediately rectify the
72 monumental clerical oversight; and

73 WHEREAS, Batra enlisted the help of his University of
74 Mississippi Medical Center colleague, Ken Sullivan, and the two
75 confirmed the error and alerted the Mississippi Secretary of
76 State, Delbert Hosemann, who promptly agreed to file the required
77 documentation with the National Archives of the United States and
78 finally make the ratification official; and

79 WHEREAS, on a day that will forever be remembered in the
80 hearts and minds of the citizens of Mississippi, February 7, 2013,
81 Director of the Federal Register, Charles A. Barth, penned a
82 letter with some of the most notable and sensational words in the
83 history of Mississippi: "With this action, the State of
84 Mississippi has ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the
85 Constitution of the United States."; and

86 WHEREAS, the people of present-day Mississippi, who wish to
87 follow in the great footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, who stated,
88 "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.",
89 strongly condemn the unconscionable practice of slavery and firmly
90 believe that it is fitting and proper to commemorate and observe
91 February 7, 2013, as "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment
92 of Slavery":

93 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
94 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING



95 THEREIN, That we do hereby acknowledge and observe February 7,
96 2013, as "Mississippi Day of Freedom and Abolishment of Slavery"
97 and encourage the State of Mississippi and its citizens to
98 commemorate and observe its significance on February 7, 2015, and
99 each year thereafter on that specified date.

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
101 furnished to the Fannie Lou Hamer Civil Rights Museum Director,
102 Helen Sims, the Governor of Mississippi, the Lieutenant Governor
103 of Mississippi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of
104 Mississippi, the Secretary of State of Mississippi and to the
105 members of the Capitol Press Corps.

