

By: Representatives Dortch, Bell (65th),  
Clarke, Summers, Banks, Crudup, Jackson,  
Paden, Straughter, Taylor, Watson, Williams-  
Barnes

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION FORMALLY REQUESTING THE JOINT  
2 COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE REPLACEMENT OF  
3 THE STATUE OF JAMES ZACHARIAH GEORGE THAT IS DISPLAYED IN STATUARY  
4 HALL IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL WITH A STATUE OF CIVIL RIGHTS  
5 ICON FANNIE LOU HAMER.

6 WHEREAS, the National Statuary Hall Collection in the United  
7 States Capitol is comprised of 100 statues contributed by each of  
8 the 50 states to honor persons notable in each state's history;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, thirty-five statues are now displayed in the  
11 National Statuary Hall, while others have been placed in other  
12 parts of the Capitol, including the Crypt, the Hall of Columns and  
13 the Capitol Visitor Center; and

14 WHEREAS, Mississippi has representational statues of  
15 Jefferson Davis and James Zachariah George displayed, which were  
16 crafted by Augustus Lukeman and dedicated in 1931; and

17 WHEREAS, Jefferson Davis, who authored *Rise and Fall of the*  
18 *Confederate States*, served in the United States House of  
19 Representatives and the United States Senate, was President of the



20 Confederate States and eventually made his home at Beauvoir, near  
21 Biloxi, Mississippi; and

22 WHEREAS, James Zachariah George was a Confederate colonel who  
23 served on the Mississippi Supreme Court and represented  
24 Mississippi in the United States Senate, helped frame the future  
25 Sherman Anti-Trust Act, served as a member of the Mississippi  
26 Constitutional Convention of 1890 and successfully defended the  
27 constitution before the Senate and the Supreme Court; and

28 WHEREAS, both men are important figures who reflect similar  
29 times, but do not necessarily reflect the unified and progressive  
30 spirit encompassing the Mississippi of today, as it is  
31 Mississippi's sentimental desire to respect and celebrate the past  
32 while honoring its evolution from past icons to present icons; and

33 WHEREAS, on October 6, 1917, the world was blessed with the  
34 birth of an American voting rights advocate, civil rights leader  
35 and generous philanthropist, Fannie Lou Hamer, and now, the State  
36 of Mississippi, as well as the United States of America still  
37 revel in the progress and promise that she bestowed upon her  
38 fellow Mississippians and fellow Americans; and

39 WHEREAS, born in Montgomery County, Mississippi, the youngest  
40 of 20 children born to Ella and James Lee Townsend, Fannie Lou and  
41 her family moved to Sunflower County, Mississippi, to work as  
42 sharecroppers on the plantation of W.D. Marlow, where she began  
43 picking cotton at the age of six; and



44 WHEREAS, Fannie Lou attended school in a one-room schoolhouse  
45 on the plantation from 1924 until 1930, but when the importance of  
46 her ability to pick 200 to 300 pounds of cotton daily outweighed  
47 the importance of her education, she was forced to drop out and  
48 toil in the fields all day, fortunately though, not before she had  
49 learned how to read and write; and

50 WHEREAS, her ability to read and write earned her the title  
51 of time and record keeper for the plantation in 1944, and in 1945,  
52 she married Perry "Pap" Hamer, and the two of them worked together  
53 on the plantation for the next 17 years, until Mrs. Hamer was  
54 fired for registering to vote; and

55 WHEREAS, beginning her trailblazing journey to help achieve  
56 equality for African Americans at the polling place in the 1950s,  
57 Mrs. Hamer attended several annual civil rights conferences in  
58 Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where she became inspired from civil  
59 rights activists such as Mahalia Jackson, Thurgood Marshall and  
60 Representative Charles Diggs of Michigan; and

61 WHEREAS, in 1961, Mrs. Hamer truly realized the importance of  
62 her pleas for equality and change in the South and across the  
63 nation when she entered an operating room to have a tumor removed,  
64 but left without a tumor or any reproductive organs, as the white  
65 doctor from Mississippi had given her a hysterectomy without her  
66 consent as part of the state's plan to reduce the number of poor  
67 African Americans located within its borders, a practice common in  
68 the South during that time; and



69           WHEREAS, as a result of her "Mississippi appendectomy," the  
70 phrase she coined for her egregiously uninformed and nonconsensual  
71 sterilization, Mr. and Mrs. Hamer were never able to have children  
72 of their own, but unwilling to let racism prohibit them from being  
73 parents, they later raised and eventually adopted two girls; and

74           WHEREAS, "sick and tired of being sick and tired," on August  
75 23, 1962, after listening to an inspiring sermon from Reverend  
76 James Bevel, an organizer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating  
77 Committee (SNCC) and associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who  
78 encouraged African Americans to register to vote despite the  
79 hardships waiting for them at the polls, Mrs. Hamer did just that,  
80 as she was the first volunteer to register to vote; and

81           WHEREAS, on August 31, the courageous Mrs. Hamer traveled on  
82 a bus with other recipients of Reverend Bevel's sermon to  
83 Indianola, Mississippi, to register to vote, and to help calm the  
84 nerves of her fellow passengers and help them understand that what  
85 they were doing was the right thing, she sang Christian hymns,  
86 including "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and "This Little Light of  
87 Mine"; and

88           WHEREAS, the day she registered to vote proved to be  
89 bittersweet for Mrs. Hamer, because after that bus ride to  
90 Indianola, she had finally registered to vote, the same right that  
91 all other Americans had and a step towards true equality, but upon  
92 her return to Marlow's plantation, she was fired for doing the one  
93 thing she had fought so hard to do; and



94           WHEREAS, her lack of employment ultimately benefitted the  
95 Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi, as the trials, tribulations  
96 and mostly, perseverance, reached the ears of Bob Moses, the SNCC  
97 organizer, who recruited her to perform activist work all over the  
98 South, with her base location remaining in Mississippi; and

99           WHEREAS, during one of her travel days, Mrs. Hamer and other  
100 activists were returning to Mississippi from a literacy workshop  
101 in Charleston, South Carolina, when they were stopped and falsely  
102 arrested in Winona, Mississippi, but the ugliness did not end  
103 there as once they were in jail, her colleagues were beaten by  
104 police in the booking room and she was taken to a cell where the  
105 police had ordered two other inmates to beat her with a blackjack,  
106 which they did until she nearly died; and

107           WHEREAS, after being falsely detained for three days, Mrs.  
108 Hamer was finally released from the cell that would haunt her for  
109 years to come, and her recovery from the brutal beating lasted for  
110 over a month, but despite her recurring physical and psychological  
111 problems that resulted from that horrendous incident, she bravely  
112 continued advocating in Mississippi and organizing voter  
113 registration drives, including the "Freedom Ballot Campaign" in  
114 1963 and the "Freedom Summer" initiative in 1964; and

115           WHEREAS, in the summer of 1964, Mrs. Hamer helped organize  
116 the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, or "Freedom Democrats,"  
117 to challenge Mississippi's all-white, anti-civil rights delegation  
118 to the Democratic National Convention, which failed to represent



119 all Mississippians, and through her efforts, and her many, many  
120 inspirational speeches on the issue, in 1968, the Freedom  
121 Democrats were finally seated at the convention and the party  
122 adopted a clause that demanded equality of representation from  
123 their states' delegation; and

124 WHEREAS, in 1972, Mrs. Hamer was elected as a national party  
125 delegate, and throughout her life, she continued to work at the  
126 grassroots-level for programs such as Head Start, the Freedom Farm  
127 Cooperative in Sunflower County, Mississippi, and Martin Luther  
128 King, Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign; and

129 WHEREAS, a day that will forever be associated with grief and  
130 sorrow in the minds and hearts of all Americans, on March 14,  
131 1977, at the age of 59, complications from hypertension and breast  
132 cancer ended the life of our beloved civil rights leader, Mrs.  
133 Fannie Lou Hamer, but her legacy of change and progress will  
134 continue to encourage young leaders in Mississippi and around the  
135 country for generations to come; and

136 WHEREAS, 2 USC Section 2132 allows a state to request the  
137 Joint Committee on the Library of Congress to approve the removal  
138 of a previously placed statue from the collection and the  
139 replacement of it with an equally suitable and socially inclusive  
140 display that is representative of the entirety of the state's  
141 diverse citizenry; and

142 WHEREAS, if the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress  
143 approves a request, the architect of the Capitol shall enter into



144 an agreement with the state to carry out the replacement in  
145 accordance with the request and any conditions that the Joint  
146 Committee may require for its approval, and such agreement shall  
147 provide that the new statue shall be subject to the same  
148 conditions and restrictions as applied to any statue provided by a  
149 state under 2 USC Section 2131 and the state shall pay any costs  
150 related to the replacement, including costs in connection with the  
151 design, construction, transportation and placement of the new  
152 statue, the removal and transportation of the statue being  
153 replaced and any unveiling ceremony; and

154 WHEREAS, several states have chosen to replace existing  
155 statues, thereby including representations of Dwight Eisenhower,  
156 Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Thomas Edison and Helen Keller; and

157 WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature desires to replace the  
158 statue of James Zachariah George with a statue of civil rights  
159 legend Fannie Lou Hamer, to pay homage to such a selfless  
160 individual and honor and cherish the memory of this patron citizen  
161 of Mississippi, and to further reflect the transformative power of  
162 Mississippi from its past to its present; and

163 WHEREAS, we request the Governor of the State of Mississippi  
164 to affirm the efforts of this Legislature by issuing a  
165 proclamation or statement approving the request for the  
166 replacement of the statue, and to create a commission of  
167 Mississippi artisans and artists who are authorized to solicit and



168 collect private contributions for the creation and placement of  
169 the statue of Fannie Lou Hamer; and

170 WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon this Legislature to pursue the  
171 interest of its citizens by ensuring that statues representing our  
172 state wholly reflect the astounding strides made by all citizens,  
173 particularly in this instance when the state itself bears the  
174 moniker of being the "birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement,"  
175 and there has been no better ambassador of our state than the  
176 distinguished and incomparable Fannie Lou Hamer:

177 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
178 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING  
179 THEREIN, That we do hereby submit this formal request to the Joint  
180 Committee on the Library of Congress to approve the replacement of  
181 the statue of James Zachariah George with a statue of civil rights  
182 icon Fannie Lou Hamer in the Statuary Hall of the United States  
183 Capitol.

184 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
185 furnished to the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress, to  
186 the members of the Mississippi Congressional delegation and to the  
187 members of the Capitol Press Corps.

