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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The United States' history as a symbol of
3 democracy, freedom, and "home of exiles" is brandished around
4 the world; and

5 WHEREAS, The legacy of our Nation's African-descended
6 people and indigenous peoples has resounded as an echoing
7 dissonance in its "symphony of brotherhood" throughout its
8 history; and

9 WHEREAS, The legacy of African American struggles for
10 civil, political, and human rights is interwoven in the fabric
11 of democracy and freedom of the United States; and

12 WHEREAS, Millions of Africans and their descendants were
13 enslaved in the United States, from the original 13 North
14 American colonies until the abolition of slavery in 1865 with
15 the 13th Amendment to the Constitution to "slavery by another
16 name" under the twin regimes of racial economic and social
17 authoritarianism, called Jim Crow, and domestic terrorism; and

18 WHEREAS, The aggregate value of enslaved African Americans
19 at the time of Emancipation, measured in 2019 dollars, was more
20 than 13 trillion dollars, which is a meager percentage of the
21 unpaid wealth that they produced for the United States'

1 slave-based economy; and

2 WHEREAS, The gendered racism of the United States' system
3 of slavery made the productive and reproductive intrinsic value
4 of enslaved African American women an incalculable source of
5 the United States' global economic power; and

6 WHEREAS, Africans forced into slavery, brutalized,
7 humiliated, dehumanized, and subjected to the indignity of
8 being stripped of their names and heritage makes the
9 reparations due to African Americans necessary but
10 insufficient as the United States' payment on the debt of
11 African American slavery, peonage, and expropriation of Black
12 asset wealth through fraudulent mortgages like Chicago's
13 notorious "contract buyers" schemes; and

14 WHEREAS, African American families were torn apart when
15 family members were sold off, endured further separation and
16 deprivation under Jim Crow, but sought freedom and economic
17 opportunities in the Great Migration from the South to northern
18 Midwest states like Illinois; and

19 WHEREAS, The system of hereditary racial slavery that
20 commenced not long after "the 1619 year of no return" provided
21 the foundation of the system of structural racism, inequality,
22 and white supremacy that became woven into the social fabric of

1 the United States; and

2 WHEREAS, So embedded in the United States' social,
3 political, economic, religious, and cultural landscape was the
4 system of African American subjugation that it took the
5 apocalypse of the American Civil War to rid the Nation of its
6 "original sin"; and

7 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois assumes a special place in
8 the history and memorialization of "the 1619 day of no return"
9 because of the role that President Abraham Lincoln played as
10 Commander-in-Chief in defeating the armed revolt of the slave
11 power of the southern Confederacy against American democracy
12 and African American freedom; and

13 WHEREAS, It took the powerful working of the United States'
14 democratic electoral system, propelled by the movement of
15 African American slaves following the North Star to freedom in
16 solidarity with their White and free Black allies in the
17 abolitionist movement, to elect and re-elect Abraham Lincoln to
18 carry out the historic task of ridding the United States of
19 slavery; and

20 WHEREAS, The great challenge to our experiment in democracy
21 that we face today gives us further reason to memorialize the
22 Black struggle for freedom that recommitted the United States

1 to its democratic ideals, adding the Civil War Amendments
2 (13th, 14th, and 15th) to the Constitution; and

3 WHEREAS, Illinois has never evinced the same care and
4 consideration for its Black exiles from Africa that it has for
5 its White exiles from Europe; and

6 WHEREAS, Every positive step that Illinois has taken toward
7 racial justice and equality has been reversed by backward
8 legislative steps that have made Black freedom struggles in
9 Illinois continuous to this day; and

10 WHEREAS, The 1908 Springfield Race Riot in the State's
11 capital and seat of the people's representatives was the
12 catalyst for the formation of the National Association for the
13 Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and

14 WHEREAS, The 1917 East St. Louis race riot demonstrated the
15 tangled history of race, class, and economics that victimized
16 African Americans who were newly arrived to Illinois from the
17 South; and

18 WHEREAS, Springfield and East St. Louis also reflected a
19 new Black assertiveness, a "New Negro", that culminated in the
20 "Red Summer of 1919" Chicago Race Riot, whose 100th anniversary
21 is also memorialized with this resolution; and

1 WHEREAS, The history of Illinois' modern system of racial
2 segregation, heroically countered by the democratic struggles
3 of the State's African American communities, calls upon all
4 Illinois legislators to prioritize the State's legislative
5 agenda around policies and realistic funding appropriations
6 aimed at addressing the interminable legacy of racial
7 inequities in African American education, housing, labor
8 market outcomes, transportation marginalization, business
9 inequalities, healthcare disparities, and political
10 decision-making disempowerment; and

11 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois also boasts numerous racial
12 justice moments throughout its 20th century political history
13 that have impacted both the State's and the United States'
14 history, including the election of Abraham Lincoln, the
15 election of Harold Washington as the first Black Mayor of the
16 City of Chicago, the election of Barack Obama as the first
17 Black President of the United States, the election of Illinois'
18 first Black Woman Lieutenant Governor, the election of the
19 first Black Woman State Representative of Illinois' 103rd
20 District, representing the University of Illinois
21 Urbana-Champaign, the election of the first Black Chancellor of
22 the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and the election
23 in Chicago of the first Black LGBTQ Mayor of any major city in
24 the United States; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
3 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we express our support of the
4 1619 African Year of No Return resolution by turning it into
5 the Illinois Recognition of the 1619 Project: Year of Return
6 resolution; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That we urge recognition of Illinois' vibrant
8 history of African American political struggles for democracy
9 and freedom that have widened the scope and deepened the
10 State's and United States' commitment to democracy and racial
11 justice; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That we urge adequate appropriations for
13 investigations, research, publication, and a website to
14 represent Illinois' contribution to widening and deepening the
15 State's and the United States' commitment to racial justice in
16 memorializing the 1619-2019 Year of Return; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That we urge adequate appropriations for the
18 development of a comprehensive legislative agenda of policies
19 and pending racial justice legislation for engagement with the
20 State's African American stakeholders to memorialize the
21 1619-2019 Year of Return.