



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, 138 years ago Brigham Young and more than 20,000
3 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were
4 expelled from the State of Illinois after the Illinois General
5 Assembly withdrew its charter for the city of Nauvoo, Illinois
6 in Hancock County in 1844; and

7 WHEREAS, During a period of seven years of Illinois
8 history, from 1839 to 1846, Latter-day Saints built and
9 developed the city of Nauvoo into the largest city in the State
10 of Illinois and the tenth largest city in the nation; and

11 WHEREAS, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
12 was established by Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York on April
13 6, 1830; and

14 WHEREAS, The Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, led the
15 community of Latter-day Saints from Fayette, New York to
16 Kirtland, Ohio in 1831; and from Ohio to Independence,
17 Missouri, in 1837; and

18 WHEREAS, Joseph Smith, a strong anti-slavery advocate, led
19 his community of some 15,000 Latter-day Saints to the
20 Mississippi River town of Nauvoo, in Illinois, following their
21 expulsion from the slave State of Missouri in 1839; and

22 WHEREAS, Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints exercised
23 enormous industry and effort in the development and growth of
24 the town of Nauvoo, succeeding in creating a prosperous
25 community in which they drained the local swamp lands and
26 transformed them into productive agricultural and residential
27 environments; and

28 WHEREAS, Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints were given
29 an extraordinary charter for the powers of home-rule by the

1 Illinois General Assembly to create and preside over their own
2 court system and also to maintain their own military force,
3 second in size only to the United States Army; and

4 WHEREAS, Joseph Smith and the community of Latter-day
5 Saints exercised extensive missionary activities which drew
6 new Mormon settlers to the city Nauvoo, reaching a population
7 of some 20,000 citizens by 1844; and

8 WHEREAS, The prevailing economic conditions of the nation
9 in general, and Illinois in particular, faced a downturn in the
10 early 1840s, with the result that the rapidly growing
11 population of Nauvoo faced drastic levels of unemployment
12 without success in attracting needed industry; and

13 WHEREAS, During the period of their residency in Nauvoo,
14 Joseph Smith and his community of Latter-day Saints began as
15 political Democrats, transferring their political allegiance
16 to the Whig Party in both the elections of 1838 and 1840,
17 before once again transferring their affiliations back to the
18 Democratic Party in the election of 1842, until the
19 establishment of the Reform Party by Smith in time for the
20 election of 1844, when he began to seriously campaign for the
21 office of President of the United States; and

22 WHEREAS, The expression of political authority and power
23 within the community of Latter-day Saints was seen by many
24 citizens in Illinois as reasons for caution and concern, seeing
25 the control of local courts by Joseph Smith as autocratic, and
26 interpreting the leverage and influence of the Mormon
27 community's voting strength as an over influential forceful and
28 voting bloc; and

29 WHEREAS, Local religious customs among the Latter-day
30 Saints began to be viewed with suspicion, bias and
31 misunderstanding; and

1 WHEREAS, Following the destruction of a local anti-Mormon
2 newspaper known as the Expositor, violence against the
3 Latter-day Saint community increased; and

4 WHEREAS, The Governor of the State of Illinois, Thomas
5 Ford, called out the Illinois Militia to keep order; and

6 WHEREAS, Governor Ford had the Prophet Joseph Smith and his
7 brother, Hiram Smith, jailed, on suspicion of complicity in the
8 destruction of the Expositor, in the nearby town jail of
9 Carthage, Illinois; and

10 WHEREAS, A violent mob stormed the Carthage jail on June
11 27, 1844, causing the deaths of Joseph and Hiram Smith; and

12 WHEREAS, Between 1844 and 1845, violent acts against the
13 community of Latter-day Saints increased in volume and
14 intensity, demonstrated in such acts as the burning of crops,
15 the destruction of homes and the threaten extermination of the
16 entire Mormon population; and

17 WHEREAS, Faced with the extremism against the community of
18 Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young, the new leader of the Nauvoo
19 community made plans to take his people out of Illinois; and

20 WHEREAS, Beginning on February 4, 1846, Brigham Young began
21 sending the community of Latter-day Saints out of their
22 homeland of Nauvoo, Illinois across the frozen waters of the
23 Mississippi River, in the largest forced migration in American
24 history; and

25 WHEREAS, Brigham Young made an exodus from the State of
26 Illinois, leading tens of thousands of men, women and children,
27 together with livestock and wagons that stretched across the
28 expansive winter horizon for miles; and

1 WHEREAS, In this Mormon exodus, Brigham Young and the
2 community of Latter-day Saints left behind their life in
3 Illinois and the shining city that they had fashioned from both
4 their faith and the hard work of their hands; and

5 WHEREAS, Brigham Young and the community of Latter-day
6 Saints set off in the midst of winter for Utah, some 1300 miles
7 to the west; and

8 WHEREAS, The severity of the winter placed on Brigham Young
9 and the community of Latter-day Saints extreme hardships,
10 trudging across the Iowa Plains to the far side of that state
11 where they made a winter camp; and

12 WHEREAS, In the Spring of 1847, Brigham Young and the
13 community of Latter-day Saints began again their journey to
14 Utah, beyond the Rocky Mountain Range, to the valley of the
15 Great Salt Lake; and

16 WHEREAS, On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young and the community
17 of Latter-day Saints arrived in that valley following a trek of
18 more than five months, journeying across the heart of the
19 American continent, from the heartbreak of events in Nauvoo,
20 Illinois to a place of far-western refuge; and

21 WHEREAS, Within 50 years of their arrival in the territory
22 of Utah, the community of Latter-day Saint became the 45th
23 state in the Union on January 4, 1896; and

24 WHEREAS, The community of Latter-day Saints grew from a
25 population of 250,000 at the end of the 19th century to a
26 population of more than 10 million people in our present day;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, The goodness, patriotism, high moral conduct, and

1 generosity of the community of Latter-day Saints has enriched
2 the landscape of the United States and the world; and

3 WHEREAS, The biases and prejudices of a less enlightened
4 age in the history of the State of Illinois caused untolled
5 hardship and trauma for the community of Latter-day Saints by
6 the distrust, violence, and inhospitable actions of a dark time
7 in our past; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
9 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
10 acknowledge the disparity of those past actions and suspicions,
11 regretting the expulsion of the community of Latter-day Saints,
12 a people of faith and hard work; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That we asks the pardon and forgiveness of the
14 community of Latter-day Saints for the misguided efforts of our
15 citizens, Chief Executive and the General Assembly in the
16 expulsion of their Mormon ancestors from the gleaming city of
17 Nauvoo and the State of Illinois.