



1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their
3 descendants were enslaved in the United States and colonies
4 that became the United States from 1619 to 1865; and

5 WHEREAS, The institution of slavery was constitutionally
6 and statutorily sanctioned by the Government of the United
7 States from 1789 through 1865; and

8 WHEREAS, The slavery that flourished in the United States
9 constituted an immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans'
10 life, liberty, African citizenship rights, and cultural
11 heritage, and denied them the fruits of their own labor; and

12 WHEREAS, Sufficient inquiry has not been made into the
13 effects of the institution of slavery on living
14 African-Americans and society in the United States; therefore,
15 be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL
17 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
18 CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is established the Commission to
19 Study the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its Past and Present
20 Effects on African-Americans (hereinafter referred to as the
21 Commission); and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall perform the following
23 duties:

24 (1) Examine the institution of slavery which existed
25 within the United States and the colonies that became the
26 United States from 1619 through 1865; the Commission's
27 examination shall include an examination of:

- 28 (A) the capture and procurement of Africans;
- 29 (B) the transport of Africans to the United States
- 30 and the colonies that became the United States for the

1 purpose of enslavement, including their treatment
2 during transport;

3 (C) the sale and acquisition of Africans as chattel
4 property in interstate and intrastate commerce; and

5 (D) the treatment of African slaves in the colonies
6 and the United States, including the deprivation of
7 their freedom, exploitation of their labor, and
8 destruction of their culture, language, religion, and
9 families;

10 (2) Examine the extent to which the Federal and State
11 governments of the United States supported the institution
12 of slavery in constitutional and statutory provisions,
13 including the extent to which such governments prevented,
14 opposed, or restricted efforts of freed African slaves to
15 repatriate to their homeland;

16 (3) Examine Federal and State laws that discriminated
17 against freed African slaves and their descendants during
18 the period between the end of the Civil War and the
19 present;

20 (4) Examine other forms of discrimination in the public
21 and private sectors against freed African slaves and their
22 descendants during the period between the end of the Civil
23 War and the present;

24 (5) Examine the lingering negative effects of the
25 institution of slavery and the matters described in
26 paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) on living
27 African-Americans and on society in the United States;

28 (6) Recommend appropriate ways to educate the general
29 public of the Commission's findings;

30 (7) Examine whether African-Americans still suffer
31 from the lingering effects of the matters described in
32 paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4); and be it further

33 RESOLVED, That the members of the Commission shall include
34 the President of the Senate or his or her designee and the
35 Speaker of the House of Representatives or his or her designee,

1 each serving as co-chairpersons, the Governor or his or her
2 designee, one vice-chairperson appointed by each of the
3 co-chairpersons, and 25 appointed members, with the Governor,
4 the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
5 Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the
6 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives appointing 5
7 members each; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the appointed members shall be from diverse
9 backgrounds so as to reflect the diverse citizenry of Illinois
10 working together, and that their individual qualifications
11 shall include varying educational, professional, and civic
12 experiences that bring different perspectives and cooperative
13 outlooks to the Commission; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall broaden outreach by
15 using established channels, including publicly-supported media
16 and electronic, computer-assisted communication systems, and
17 elicit voluntary assistance from educational, legal, civic,
18 and professional organizations and institutions as well as
19 notable individuals; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That no later than December 1, 2006, the
21 Commission shall report to the General Assembly, the Governor,
22 and the general public on its activities, accomplishments, and
23 recommendations; and that the Commission shall be dissolved
24 after the filing of this report; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
26 delivered to the Governor of the State of Illinois.