

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2007**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1311**

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Sponsors: Representatives Womble, Parmon, Adams, Insko (Primary Sponsors); Alexander, Carney, Cotham, Faison, Farmer-Butterfield, Fisher, Harrison, Luebke, Martin, McLawhorn, Pierce, Samuelson, Saunders, Stam, Tillis, Underhill, Wainwright, E. Warren, Weiss, and Wray.

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Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

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April 5, 2007

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S  
2 PROFOUND REGRET FOR THE INSTITUTION AND LASTING EFFECTS OF  
3 SLAVERY.

4 Whereas, many European settlers, including some of those who sailed on the  
5 Mayflower in 1620, came to the American colonies as indentured servants, served out  
6 the terms of their servitude, and then enjoyed the fruits of their labor and the protections  
7 of law; and

8 Whereas, some American Indians were exploited as slaves until they were  
9 replaced by Africans; and

10 Whereas, at least 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were held in  
11 involuntary servitude in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619  
12 and 1865; and

13 Whereas, the practice of slavery began in North Carolina soon after it was  
14 established as a colony; and

15 Whereas, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was a lucrative enterprise and  
16 uncompensated African slave labor was the backbone of the economic base of  
17 plantations in the colonies; and

18 Whereas, the sale of human beings as chattel was sanctioned and perpetuated  
19 through the laws of North Carolina and of the United States; and

20 Whereas, under the slave codes, persons held in involuntary servitude were  
21 not permitted to own property, to carry arms, or to move about without permission; and

22 Whereas, a number of Africans and their descendants who bought their  
23 freedom or were set free by former slaveholders during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries  
24 successfully engaged in various labors, trades, and businesses in the State despite great  
25 obstacles; and

26 Whereas, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the State began to discourage black businesses  
27 and the presence of free blacks in North Carolina and passed legislation to restrict the

1 liberty of free blacks. An 1826 law provided that a free black who moved into the State  
2 and failed to leave after being notified of the law, after 20 days, could be fined \$500.00  
3 or held to labor for 10 years or less. An 1830 law prohibited free blacks from returning  
4 to this State after being absent for a period of 90 days or more; and

5       Whereas, the passage of such harsh laws served to force free persons of color  
6 from the State, often splitting families and resulting in the loss of property and  
7 economic gains; and

8       Whereas, in 1830, North Carolina law provided that a slave could be  
9 sentenced to 39 lashes if he or she was found guilty of teaching another slave how to  
10 read; and

11       Whereas, in 1860, the General Assembly enacted legislation requiring free  
12 persons of color to select their own masters and become slaves; and

13       Whereas, American slavery was officially abolished with the passage of the  
14 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the United States Constitution in 1865; and

15       Whereas, during the Reconstruction era former slaves and their children came  
16 under the protections of law and started making significant economic and social gains;  
17 and

18       Whereas, by the turn of the 20th century, a backlash against black progress  
19 during Reconstruction resulted in the rise of the white supremacist and segregationist  
20 movements; and

21       Whereas, Jim Crow laws were enacted to create a rigid "separate but equal"  
22 segregation system that discriminated against non-whites in many areas of life; and,

23       Whereas, the United States Supreme Court declared segregation unlawful in  
24 the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 and ordered the end of segregated  
25 public schools. However, soon after that decision, the General Assembly ratified a  
26 resolution providing that "the mixing of the races in the public schools within the State  
27 cannot be accomplished and if attempted would alienate public support of the schools to  
28 such an extent that they could not be operated successfully"; and

29       Whereas, with the Civil Rights Movement, the passage of the 1964 Civil  
30 Rights Act finally led to the end of Jim Crow laws and the 1965 Voting Rights Act  
31 ended systematic racial discrimination in voting for federal, state, and local elections;  
32 and

33       Whereas, from the beginning of their presence in North Carolina and on into  
34 the 21<sup>st</sup> century, African-Americans struggle to overcome the economic and social  
35 affects of slavery and the legacy of the institutionalized racism and segregation spawned  
36 by slavery; and

37       Whereas, the harsh story of North Carolina slavery must be acknowledged  
38 and the faith, perseverance, hope, and endless triumphs of the descendant of slaves  
39 should be recognized; and

40       Whereas, an apology for centuries of injustice cannot erase the past, but the  
41 acknowledgment of wrongs can speed healing and reconciliation and help all North  
42 Carolinians confront our collective past as we move together into the future; Now,  
43 therefore,

44 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

1           **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly formally apologizes for the injustice,  
2 cruelty, and brutality of slavery, cites its historical role in perpetuating slavery and  
3 racism, and expresses its profound regret for the practice of involuntary servitude in this  
4 State and for the many hardships experienced, past and present, on account of slavery.

5           **SECTION 2.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.