



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 632**

*January Session, 2009*

House Joint Resolution No. 1

*House of Representatives, April 15, 2009*

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. SPALLONE of the 36th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the joint resolution ought to be adopted.

***RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND REGRET OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE HISTORY OF WRONGS INFLICTED UPON BLACK CITIZENS BY MEANS OF SLAVERY, EXPLOITATION AND LEGALIZED RACIAL SEGREGATION, AND CALLING ON ALL CITIZENS TO TAKE PART IN ACTS OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION.***

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 WHEREAS, involuntary servitude, as practiced within the borders  
2 of Connecticut in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries  
3 violated the precept that all persons are created equal and denied  
4 thousands of people liberty, the pursuit of happiness, the ability to  
5 benefit from their own work, and, in many cases, life itself; and

6 WHEREAS, in 1723, the Connecticut colony passed an act to prevent  
7 the "Disorder of Negro and Indian Servants and Slaves in the Night  
8 Season" that established a nine o'clock p.m. curfew, the violation of  
9 which was punishable with a whipping for the servant and a fine for  
10 the master; and

11 WHEREAS, Connecticut's wealth increased as its merchants and  
12 businessmen participated in the Triangle Trade which carried slaves,  
13 cash crops and manufactured goods between West Africa, the  
14 Caribbean and America and such merchants and businessmen profited  
15 from supplying food and livestock to slaves in the West Indies who  
16 labored on sugar cane plantations; and

17 WHEREAS, by the mid 1770's there were approximately five  
18 thousand one hundred slaves in the Connecticut colony, comprising  
19 three per cent of the population, and slave ownership was not limited  
20 to the wealthy; and

21 WHEREAS, the practice of slavery was embedded in constitutional  
22 provisions and laws enacted by predecessors to this General Assembly  
23 and other civil authorities of Connecticut; and

24 WHEREAS, emancipation bills were rejected by the Connecticut  
25 Legislature in 1777, 1779 and 1780; and

26 WHEREAS, the Connecticut Legislature did enact the  
27 Nonimportation Act of 1774, the 1784 Gradual Abolition Act and the  
28 1788 Act to Prevent the Slave Trade; and

29 WHEREAS, in 1818 Connecticut's new constitution specifically  
30 denied the right of the African American population to vote; and

31 WHEREAS, Connecticut played a significant role in abolition efforts  
32 which culminated in the outlawing of slavery in 1848; and

33 WHEREAS, a significant number of nations, states and corporations  
34 have come forward to offer apologies for the roles they played in  
35 promoting or supporting slavery.

36 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Connecticut  
37 General Assembly issues its apology for the practices of slavery in  
38 Connecticut and expresses its profound contrition for the official acts  
39 that sanctioned and perpetuated the denial of basic human rights and  
40 dignity to fellow humans and vows to work for the elimination of

41 residual structures of racism that continue to exist in our state; and

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Assembly urges  
43 schools, colleges, universities, religious and civic institutions,  
44 businesses and professional associations to do all within their  
45 respective powers to acknowledge the transgressions of Connecticut's  
46 journey from a colony to a leading state in the abolition efforts and to  
47 learn the lessons of history in order to avoid repeating mistakes of the  
48 past and to promote racial equality and reconciliation; and

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Assembly calls on all  
50 Connecticut residents to recommit their state, their communities and  
51 themselves to the proclamation of their nation's Declaration of  
52 Independence that "all persons are created equal and endowed by their  
53 creator with certain inalienable rights" and to work daily to treat all  
54 persons with abiding respect for their humanity and to eliminate racial  
55 prejudices, injustices and discrimination from our society.

**GAE**      *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

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***OFA Fiscal Note***

***State Impact:*** None

***Municipal Impact:*** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****HJ 1*****RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND REGRET OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE HISTORY OF WRONGS INFLICTED UPON BLACK CITIZENS BY MEANS OF SLAVERY, EXPLOITATION AND LEGALIZED RACIAL SEGREGATION, AND CALLING ON ALL CITIZENS TO TAKE PART IN ACTS OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION.*****SUMMARY:**

Through this resolution, the General Assembly:

1. issues an apology for slavery practiced in Connecticut and the official acts that sanctioned and perpetuated it;
2. vows to work to eliminate the residual structures of racism existing in the state;
3. urges educational, religious, civic, and business entities to acknowledge and learn from Connecticut's past, including as a leading state in the abolition efforts, to promote racial equality and reconciliation; and
4. calls on residents to recommit their state, communities, and themselves to work daily to promote equality, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence; treat all people with respect; and eliminate racial prejudices and injustices.

The resolution provides a brief history of how Connecticut first supported slavery and then worked toward its abolition. It acknowledges that several nations, states, and corporations have issued apologies for their roles in promoting slavery.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 14 Nay 0 (03/27/2009)