

1 HJR385
2 185994-1
3 By Representatives Knight, Holmes (A), McClammy, Hollis,
4 Lawrence, England, Drummond, Howard, Buskey, Bracy, Daniels,
5 Moore (M), Rogers, Coleman, Givan and Hall
6 RFD: Rules
7 First Read: 27-APR-17

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8 RECOGNIZING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF VOTING AND
9 OFFICE HOLDING BY AFRICAN AMERICANS IN ALABAMA.

10
11 WHEREAS, in March 1867, the United States Congress
12 passed the First Reconstruction Act, which called for southern
13 states to draft new constitutions including equal suffrage
14 rights for freedmen; and

15 WHEREAS, black suffrage became a reality in Alabama
16 when the first African Americans to cast ballots in the state
17 did so on April 1, 1867, in a Tuscumbia mayoral election; and

18 WHEREAS, General John Pope, military governor of the
19 Third Military District, which included the State of Alabama,
20 issued orders dividing the state into forty-four voting
21 districts; and

22 WHEREAS, two white males and one African American
23 male were appointed as registrars to oversee voter
24 registration in each district; and

25 WHEREAS, these black registrars were the first
26 African American officeholders in the State of Alabama; and

1 WHEREAS, between July 1 and August 20, 1867, 88,243
2 African American men registered to vote throughout Alabama;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, the 1867 voter registration books, held at
5 the Alabama Department of Archives and History, are the first
6 public records that document the first and last names of
7 African American males living in Alabama; and

8 WHEREAS, held October 1-3, 1867, the successful
9 referendum on calling a constitutional convention marked the
10 first time that African American men throughout Alabama cast
11 ballots; and

12 WHEREAS, eighteen of the one hundred delegates
13 elected to the constitutional convention were African
14 American, making that convention the first meeting of black
15 and white lawmakers in the state's history; and

16 WHEREAS, the delegates to that convention framed a
17 constitution which established equal apportionment, created
18 the constitutional office of lieutenant governor, guaranteed
19 property rights for married women, curtailed imprisonment for
20 debt, and laid aside one-fifth of the state's annual revenue
21 for the support of free, public, universal education; and

22 WHEREAS, since 1867, generations of African American
23 Alabamians have distinguished themselves in multifaceted
24 campaigns large and small to protect the right to vote for all
25 citizens, suffrage being a cherished and long-sought
26 constitutional right; now therefore,

1 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
2 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we do hereby commemorate the
3 sesquicentennial anniversary of the first votes cast and first
4 public offices held by African Americans in the State of
5 Alabama.