

House Resolution 353

By: Representatives Mughal of the 105th, Beverly of the 143rd, Romman of the 97th,
Cummings of the 39th, Gilliard of the 162nd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the historical importance of Bilali Muhammad, a prominent Muslim and
2 African American from Sapelo Island, Georgia; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Bilali Muhammad was born in Timbo, Guinea, sometime between 1760
4 and 1779 to a well-educated African Muslim family; and

5 WHEREAS, he was enslaved as a teenager, taken to the Bahamas, and sold to Dr. Bell,
6 where he worked as a slave for ten years at the Middle Caicos plantation before being bought
7 by Thomas Spaulding in 1802; and

8 WHEREAS, he was the slave driver of 400 enslaved people on the plantation where he was
9 enslaved; and

10 WHEREAS, Bilali could speak Arabic and had knowledge of the Quran; and

11 WHEREAS, Bilali and his fellow Muslims on Sapelo Island, Georgia, helped to defend the
12 United States from a British attack in the War of 1812; and

13 WHEREAS, after Bilali's death in 1857, it was discovered that he had written a 13-page
14 Arabic manuscript that at first was thought to have been his diary, but closer inspection
15 revealed that the manuscript was a transcription of a Muslim legal treatise and part of West
16 Africa's Muslim curriculum.

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
18 the members of this body recognize the historical impact and legacy of Bilali Muhammad.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
20 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
21 public and the press.