

House Resolution 419

By: Representatives Schofield of the 63rd, Lim of the 98th, McClain of the 109th, Davis of the 87th, and Scott of the 76th

A RESOLUTION

1 Commending the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of
2 Cherokee Indians, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the historical tribes that once
3 called Georgia their home, including the Yuchi Tribe, Chickasaw Nation, Seminole Nation,
4 Seminole Tribe of Florida, Shawnee Tribe, and all tribes; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, the ancestors of today's Southeastern tribes and other Native peoples have for
6 millennia inhabited the lands of the present day State of Georgia. The Lower Muscogee
7 Creek, a major tribe, occupied towns on the Fall Line, the Piedmont, and coastal plain areas.
8 They were not one tribe but several tribes that formed a powerful confederacy. The
9 Cherokee, another major tribe, occupied the mountains of northern Georgia; and

10 WHEREAS, the arrival and settlement of General James Oglethorpe, founder of the Colony
11 of Georgia, opened a new chapter in the histories of the Native peoples of said territory; and

12 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia acknowledges the significant role that the Native American
13 tribes have played in permitting the birth of this colony to take root, such as Tomochichi; and

14 WHEREAS, in 1801, the first mission school to the Cherokee and the Lower Muscogee
15 Creek was established at Spring Place, Georgia. The Moravian mission became a model for

16 ministry, education, and farming techniques, and in subsequent years, a friend and ally to the
17 chiefs and tribal heads at New Echota, capital of the Cherokee Nation; and

18 WHEREAS, on November 12, 1825, New Echota was officially designated as the capital of
19 the Cherokee Nation, and the tribal council also began a building program that included
20 construction of a two-story council house, a supreme court, and later, the office of the first
21 Indian-language newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, which used the new syllabary created by
22 the Cherokee scholar Sequoyah; and

23 WHEREAS, the Native American sovereign rights to their lands and nations were confirmed
24 by the United States Supreme Court in the case of Worcester vs. Georgia, in which Chief
25 Justice John Marshall opined that all Muscogee Creek land east of the Mississippi is that of
26 nations and that the federal government had the sole right to deal with the Indian nations in
27 North America. Justice Marshall also clearly stated that neither the states nor the federal
28 government had the right of possession to Native lands nor political dominion over the laws
29 enacted by Native peoples; and

30 WHEREAS, in subsequent years prior to 1830, relationships with all Native tribes began to
31 deteriorate. In 1826, the Treaty of Washington was signed, which ceded to the United States
32 all Muscogee Creek land east of the Mississippi River. The passage of the Indian Removal
33 Act of 1830 initiated the removal of the Native peoples from Georgia beginning with the
34 Lower Muscogee Creek, thus perpetrating the removal of approximately 17,000 Creeks to
35 the Oklahoma Territory. Georgia then included Cherokee territory in its Sixth Land Lottery,
36 allocating Cherokee land to white settlers, although the Cherokee Nation had never ceded the
37 land to the state; over the next six years, the Georgia Guard operated against the Cherokees,
38 evicting them from their properties; by 1834, New Echota was becoming a ghost town, and
39 council meetings were moved to Red Clay, Cherokee Nation, now in Tennessee; and

40 WHEREAS, as the General Assembly recalled in a 1997 resolution dedicating the Trail of
41 Tears Highway: "New Echota was converted from the capital of a nation to a holding pen for
42 the human inhabitants of that nation as they were rounded up and corralled like cattle to
43 embark on one of the most sordid chapters in our state's history, the forced migration of the
44 Cherokee people from their native Southeastern foothills and mountains to Oklahoma, an
45 event that lives in infamy as the Trail of Tears"; and

46 WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land, which we
47 are sworn to protect and uphold; and

48 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper for members of this body to recognize the
49 importance of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, the United Keetoowah Band
50 of Cherokee Indians, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, including the historical
51 tribes such as the Yuchi Tribe, Chickasaw Nation, and the Seminole Nation, Seminole Tribe
52 of Florida Indians, and the Shawnee Tribe to the rich history of this state and our nation; and

53 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
54 the members of this body, in honor of Native American Honoring Day, commend the
55 Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians,
56 Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the historical tribes, including the Yuchi Tribe,
57 Chickasaw Nation, Seminole Nation, Seminole Tribe of Florida Indians, the Shawnee Tribe,
58 and all tribes.

59 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body proclaim, "LET US GO
60 DOWN TO THE RIVER, LET US BURY THE HATCHET AND PLANT THE TREE OF
61 PEACE!"

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