

112TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 617

Recognizing the enduring cultural and historical significance of emancipation in the Nation’s capital on the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which established the “first freed” on April 16, 1862.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 16, 2012

Ms. NORTON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the enduring cultural and historical significance of emancipation in the Nation’s capital on the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which established the “first freed” on April 16, 1862.

Whereas the District of Columbia has a been a focal point of the Nation’s complex racial history, which has included slavery, the Civil War, brutal and unjustified killings of innocent citizens, racial segregation, and legal disenfranchisement, among other violations of human rights;

Whereas on April 16, 1862, in the midst of the United States Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which authorized the United States Treasury to expend nearly

\$1,000,000, up to \$300 per slave, to effect the freeing of about 3,100 persons of African descent, and offered \$100 to former slaves who agreed to emigrate to countries outside of the United States;

Whereas on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which established a “new birth of freedom” by legally emancipating millions of slaves in the 10 States of the Confederacy not under Union control, freeing the majority of the Nation’s slaves;

Whereas the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which reads “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation”, was adopted on December 6, 1865, and effectively outlawed slavery in the United States;

Whereas the enslavement of persons of African descent endured for more than two centuries in what is now the United States, including the District of Columbia;

Whereas in 2005, District of Columbia Emancipation Day was made a legal public holiday in the District of Columbia, to be celebrated annually on April 16; and

Whereas the residents of the District of Columbia, who pay Federal taxes, serve in the United States Armed Forces, are subject to all of the requirements of citizenship, and otherwise have long made contributions to the life, culture, and leadership of the United States, still are denied voting representation in the United States Congress,

budget autonomy, and other measures of independence from congressional interference afforded to other United States jurisdictions in violation of the basic principles of local governance and taxation requiring representation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recog-
2 nizes District of Columbia Emancipation Day, marking
3 the 150th anniversary of the end of slavery in the District
4 of Columbia, and symbolizing the aspirations of the citi-
5 zens of the District of Columbia for the same rights and
6 freedoms afforded to all United States citizens.

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