

House Resolution 1285

By: Representatives Metze of the 55th, Thomas of the 56th, Smyre of the 135th, Mitchell of the 88th, Abrams of the 89th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing Turner Theological Seminary and honoring Bishop Henry McNeal Turner; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Turner Theological Seminary, named in honor of Bishop Henry McNeal
4 Turner, the resident bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia, began as
5 a department of Morris Brown College in 1894; and

6 WHEREAS, Bishop Turner, born to Sarah Greer and Hardy Turner, free people, in 1834,
7 was a pioneer in Georgia government and the African Methodist Episcopal Church; and

8 WHEREAS, he helped to set the framework for the democratic form of government, serving
9 Georgia in the Constitutional Convention that produced the Georgia Constitution of 1877;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, he was known for demanding the respect of the legislators to acknowledge the
12 humanity of African Americans and to recognize the inalienable rights given to African
13 Americans by God; and

14 WHEREAS, fighting to get legislators to establish rights for African Americans under the
15 Constitution in the same manner that they applied to white citizens, Bishop Turner, having
16 obtained his education from a law firm in Abbeville, South Carolina, was elected to represent
17 Macon in 1878; and

18 WHEREAS, he converted to Methodism, and decided to become a preacher, receiving his
19 license to preach in the Methodist church in 1853; and

20 WHEREAS, married to Eliza Preacher and father to 14 children, Bishop Turner and his
21 family ventured into Louisiana, Missouri, and throughout Georgia, to set up African
22 Methodist Episcopal churches; and

23 WHEREAS, in an effort to expand the educational knowledge of African Americans, Bishop
24 Turner used the Bible to teach the fundamentals of formal education to African Americans
25 in towns and plantations that served as an organization of the African Methodist Episcopal
26 Church; and

27 WHEREAS, Bishop Turner held pastorates in Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, Bishop Turner's legacy of religious education continues in the theological
30 seminary that bears his name, which was approved in 1900; and

31 WHEREAS, the Trustee Board of Morris Brown College, under the leadership of Bishop
32 William Reid Wilkes, Sr., authorized Turner Theological Seminary to become a founding
33 constituent of the Interdenominational Theological Center in 1958, and Dr. George A. Sewell
34 was appointed Director and Dean; and

35 WHEREAS, the seminary received its own charter in 1975, and thereby, its first separate
36 Board of Trustees was elected under the leadership of Bishop Richard Allen Hildebrand; and

37 WHEREAS, those who followed Dr. Sewell as deans have included Dr. Josephus R. Coan,
38 Dr. Cecil W. Cone, Dr. George L. Champion, Dr. Clayton D. Wilkerson, and Dr. Daniel W.
39 Jacobs, Sr.; and

40 WHEREAS, during Dr. Jacobs's tenure, the Frederick Hilborn Talbot Hall was erected and
41 the enrollment has more than doubled; and

42 WHEREAS, the Frederick Hilborn Talbot Hall, containing offices, a chapel, laundromat
43 concession area, 32 dormitory rooms, 20 efficiencies, and five one-bedroom apartments, was
44 the result of the tireless efforts of Bishop Talbot; and

45 WHEREAS, the legacy of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner is kept alive under the leadership
46 of the present President-Dean, Dr. John F. Green, through the Seminary's Annual Founders'
47 Observance; and

48 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the outstanding accomplishments of this
49 remarkable and distinguished bishop and seminary be appropriately recognized.

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
51 the members of this body recognize the 122nd Founders' Observance of Turner Theological
52 Seminary in honor of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and February 9, 2016, as Bishop Henry
53 McNeal Turner Day within the State of Georgia.

54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
55 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to
56 Turner Theological Seminary.