

House Resolution 1648

By: Representatives Cannon of the 58th, Park of the 101st, Shannon of the 84th, Thomas of the 56th, Beverly of the 143rd, and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing that Black Lives Matter; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the legacies of slavery, racism, and white supremacy are deeply embedded in
3 America; and
- 4 WHEREAS, the first enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to the United States in 1619,
5 initiating a system of social and economic subordination that lasted for over two centuries
6 and came to shackle 3.9 million people in slavery in the year 1860; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the United States Constitution initially upheld the institution of slavery,
8 including Article I, Section 9, which prohibited Congress from banning the importation of
9 enslaved people until 1808, and Article IV, Section 2, which required that an enslaved person
10 escaping from one state, even to a free state, be returned to his or her owner; and
- 11 WHEREAS, Black Americans have, from the origins of the United States, been
12 systematically undercounted and excluded from the electoral process, beginning with the
13 "three-fifths compromise" enshrined in the Constitution, which counted each enslaved person
14 as three-fifths of a person for purposes of congressional representation; and
- 15 WHEREAS, the United States was built on the backs of enslaved Americans who erected the
16 White House, the United States Capitol, and the University of Georgia, among many other
17 institutions, and who were forced to labor on plantations in the eighteenth and nineteenth
18 centuries; and
- 19 WHEREAS, slave labor formed the basis of the "empire of cotton," the profits from which,
20 at the expense of enslaved people, propelled the United States to become one of the leading
21 economies in the world, an economy from which Black Americans were systematically
22 excluded; and

23 WHEREAS, the abolition of slavery did not lead to complete freedom as new systems of
24 subordination, such as convict leasing, tenant farming, and debt peonage, were created after
25 emancipation to subjugate Black Americans to continued control by White Americans and
26 to prop up a system of racial domination on different terms; and

27 WHEREAS, after emancipation, Southern home rule politicians instituted a racial caste
28 system known as Jim Crow that relegated African Americans to second-class citizenship
29 through state and local laws that enforced racial segregation; and

30 WHEREAS, efforts to build black political and economic power in the South in the late
31 nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were violently suppressed by a white-led backlash,
32 including the Colfax Massacre of 1873 in Louisiana, when a White militia killed between 62
33 and 125 Black men; the Atlanta Massacre of 1906, when White mobs murdered between 25
34 and 100 African Americans; and the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, when White rioters
35 murdered between 75 and 300 African Americans and destroyed the equivalent of \$32.25
36 million of personal property belonging to Black residents, among others; and

37 WHEREAS, according to the NAACP, 4,743 Americans were lynched between the years of
38 1882 and 1968, 3,446 of whom were Black, and the State of Georgia had the second highest
39 rate of lynchings in the country with 531 people murdered because of their race; and

40 WHEREAS, in that same period, state and local governments took deliberate action to
41 suppress the political power of Black Americans by restricting the right to vote through
42 measures such as poll taxes and literacy tests; and

43 WHEREAS, "white flight," redlining, and disinvestment in public services in urban areas in
44 the mid- to late twentieth century led to chronic underfunding of opportunities for Black
45 Americans; and

46 WHEREAS, modern-day manifestations of structural racism in the United States are laid
47 bare in stark economic disparities between White and Black Americans, including a racial
48 wealth gap, in which the median net worth of White households is ten times that of Black
49 households, and racial disparities in unemployment rates, which in 2019 were nearly three
50 times higher for Black Georgians than White Georgians, according to the Georgia Budget
51 & Policy Institute; and

52 WHEREAS, these inequities are also evident in the United States criminal justice system,
53 in which incarceration rates for Black Americans are five times higher than those of White
54 Americans; and

55 WHEREAS, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, as well as
56 the deaths of hundreds of Black Georgians, including Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks,
57 Jamarion Robinson, Shali Tilson, Caine Rogers, Jarvis Lykes, Jayvis Benjamin, DeAundre
58 Phillips, Oscar Cain, and Jabril Robinson in the past year alone, whether at the hands of
59 civilians or law enforcement officers, demonstrate the persistence of racially biased or
60 racially motivated killings of Black Americans; and

61 WHEREAS, the first step to fix a problem is to understand its severity; and

62 WHEREAS, the resiliency, leadership, and advocacy of Black Americans, from enslaved
63 people who led others to freedom to the modern-day Black Lives Matter movement, has
64 made America a more inclusive and participatory democracy, leading this country closer to
65 living up to its founding ideals of equality, liberty, and justice for all.

66 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
67 the members of this body recognize that Black Lives Matter.

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body acknowledge the historical
69 roots and present-day realities of systemic racism in the United States.

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body commit to healing the wounds
71 of the past and advancing racial equity in Georgia.

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