

House Resolution 1699

By: Representatives Jackson of the 68th, Mitchell of the 88th, Reese of the 140th, Okoye of the 102nd, Beckles of the 96th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing March 25, 2026, as the United Nations International Day of Remembrance of
2 the Victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, as the United States of America approaches and celebrates the 250th
4 Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, this milestone invites the nation to reflect
5 upon the full story of its founding, recognizing both the ideals of liberty proclaimed in 1776
6 and the struggles endured by those who labored to make those ideals a reality for all people;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, the United Nations International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the
9 Transatlantic Slave Trade, observed annually on March 25, stands as a solemn global
10 recognition of the millions of African men, women, and children who were violently
11 uprooted from their homelands and forced across the Atlantic Ocean through the horrors of
12 the Middle Passage; and

13 WHEREAS, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new resolution in December
14 2024 launching the Second International Decade for People of African Descent, running
15 from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2034, reaffirming the global commitment to justice,
16 recognition, and development for African-descended peoples, linking the remembrance of

17 the transatlantic slave trade to contemporary initiatives for equality, dignity, and reparative
18 justice; and

19 WHEREAS, the Union victory in the Civil War, culminating in General William Tecumseh
20 Sherman's March to the Sea from Atlanta to Savannah, decisively weakened the
21 Confederacy, contributed to the abolition of slavery in America, and was accompanied by
22 Special Field Orders No. 15, an unprecedented directive granting land and resources to
23 formerly enslaved African Americans; and

24 WHEREAS, the Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia, where Bishop Henry McNeal Turner served
25 with distinction, played a critical role during Reconstruction by providing support, education,
26 legal protections, and resources to newly emancipated African Americans, advancing early
27 efforts for Black self-determination, land ownership, and economic empowerment in the
28 postwar South; and

29 WHEREAS, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, a Civil War chaplain and Reconstruction
30 legislator among the historic Original 33, helped write Georgia's Reconstruction-era
31 constitutions and championed the expansion of Black civic participation, securing the right
32 to vote, hold office, and engage fully in public life for newly emancipated African
33 Americans; and

34 WHEREAS, Bishop Turner also established the African Methodist Episcopal Church in
35 Georgia, strengthening the spiritual, educational, and civic foundation for African Americans
36 in the state, and recognized the moral and material consequences of slavery by boldly calling
37 for reparations in the form of restitution for stolen labor and human capital; and

38 WHEREAS, the observance of March 25 also serves as a moment of education and
39 reflection, reminding present and future generations of the historical forces that shaped the
40 modern world and the ongoing responsibility to advance justice, human dignity, and racial
41 equality; and

42 WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta holds a special place in the global story of
43 African-descended people, particularly through institutions such as Big Bethel African
44 Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1847 and recognized as a National Historic
45 Landmark, which served as the birthplace of Morris Brown College and as a spiritual, civic,
46 and educational center often called "Sweet Auburn's City Hall" for its central role during the
47 Civil Rights Movement; and

48 WHEREAS, the Pan-African vision advanced by Bishop Turner helped inspire later
49 movements for global Black unity, including the work of Marcus Garvey, who addressed the
50 Atlanta community at Big Bethel AME Church on March 25, 1917, proclaiming a message
51 of racial pride, unity, and redemption for people of African descent worldwide; and

52 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia recognized the historical contributions of Bishop Henry
53 McNeal Turner and the Reconstruction legislators known as the Original 33 through House
54 Bill 303, acknowledging their enduring role in expanding democracy, civil rights, and the
55 moral imperative of reparative justice; and

56 WHEREAS, commemorating March 25, 2026, as the United Nations International Day of
57 Remembrance of the Victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade affirms Atlanta's ongoing
58 commitment to historical truth, global remembrance, and the pursuit of justice for all people,
59 including the fulfillment of moral and reparative obligations identified by Bishop Turner.

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
61 the members of this body recognize March 25, 2026, as the United Nations International Day
62 of Remembrance of the Victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, a powerful reminder that
63 the pursuit of liberty, justice, human dignity, and reparative justice remains an unfinished
64 journey—one that calls each generation to continue building a more just and equitable
65 society.

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