

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7009 of the First Extraordinary Session

By Love

A RESOLUTION to commemorate 400 years of contributions of Africans and African Americans in the United States.

WHEREAS, August 2019 marks the 400th commemoration of the arrival of enslaved Africans to colonial Virginia in August 1619; and

WHEREAS, the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first known enslaved Africans in colonial North America and the tragic history of American slavery that began with that event are being marked both nationally, with the establishment by the U.S. Congress of the "400 Years of African American History Commission," and in states across the country; and

WHEREAS, the 400 Years of African American History Commission will develop and carry out activities throughout the United States to commemorate the arrival of Africans; the commission will also celebrate the contributions African Americans have made since 1619, despite the debilitating effects of slavery and racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the transatlantic slave trade resulted in an estimated twelve million enslaved Africans being shipped as cargo across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries; and

WHEREAS, the largest numbers of slaves were taken to the Americas during the eighteenth century, when, according to historians' estimates, nearly three-fifths of the total volume of the transatlantic slave trade took place; and

WHEREAS, throughout our nation's history, African Americans have met with a litany of broken promises and unrealized intentions, from the failure to honor guarantees of freedom for slaves who fought for American independence in the Revolutionary War and the perversion of Reconstruction-era policies designed to ensure an equitable assimilation of recently freed

slaves to our government's initial failure and habitual resistance to meaningfully enforce various panaceas of legislation and constitutional protections amid terroristic and murderous campaigns visited upon African Americans between the Jim Crow Era and the height of the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, today, inequity still remains among African-American populations, with families' net worth being less than a late-model car, and the same families topping the list of nearly every poverty-related statistic, despite a plethora of social welfare policies; and

WHEREAS, as a country, it is imperative that we recount our history, both noble and vile, in order to find positive paths to a future in which every American may live peacefully in a world of true equality enriched by the cultural history of all our peoples; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join with governments and organizations across this nation in solemn remembrance and commemoration of the 400th year of the transatlantic slave trade and recognize the achievements of African Americans over the last 400 years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.