

House Resolution 12

By: Representatives Kendrick of the 93rd, Mitchell of the 88th, Scott of the 76th, Williams of the 168th, Hutchinson of the 107th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Expressing support for the creation of a reparations study committee by the 117th United
2 States Congress and reaffirming this state's opposition to racial discrimination; and for other
3 purposes.

4 WHEREAS, millions of Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States
5 and the 13 American colonies, including the Georgia colony and the State of Georgia, from
6 1619 through 1865; and

7 WHEREAS, slavery in America resembled no other form of involuntary servitude known
8 in history, as Africans were captured and sold at auction like inanimate objects or animals;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Africans forced into slavery were brutalized, humiliated, dehumanized, and
11 subjected to the indignity of being stripped of their names and heritage; and

12 WHEREAS, enslaved families were torn apart after having been sold separately from one
13 another; and

14 WHEREAS, the laws and institutions of this state supported and advanced the system of
15 slavery and the visceral racism against persons of African descent; and

16 WHEREAS, slavery was not officially abolished until the passage of the 13th Amendment
17 to the United States Constitution in 1865 after the end of the Civil War; and

18 WHEREAS, after emancipation from 246 years of slavery, African Americans soon saw the
19 fleeting political, social, and economic gains they made during Reconstruction eviscerated
20 by virulent racism, lynchings, disenfranchisement, Black Codes, and racial segregation laws
21 that imposed a rigid system of officially sanctioned racial segregation in virtually all areas
22 of life; and

23 WHEREAS, the system of de jure racial segregation known as "Jim Crow," which was
24 supported and advanced by the laws and institutions of this state following the Civil War to
25 create separate and unequal societies for whites and African Americans, was a direct result
26 of the racism against persons of African descent engendered by slavery; and

27 WHEREAS, a century after the official end of slavery in America, federal action was
28 required during the 1960s to eliminate the de jure and de facto system of Jim Crow
29 throughout parts of the nation, though its vestiges still linger to this day; and

30 WHEREAS, the story of the enslavement and de jure segregation of African Americans and
31 the dehumanizing atrocities committed against them should not be purged from or minimized
32 in the telling of American history; and

33 WHEREAS, on December 9, 2015, while commemorating the 150th anniversary of the 13th
34 Amendment, President Barack Obama observed that "the issue of chattel slavery seems so

35 simple, so obvious – it is wrong in every sense . . . Tearing husband from wife, parent from
36 child; stripped and sold to the highest bidder; shackled in chains and bloodied with the whip.
37 It's antithetical not only to our conception of human rights and dignity, but to our conception
38 of ourselves – a people founded on the premise that all are created equal"; and

39 WHEREAS, on July 8, 2003, during a trip to Goree Island, Senegal, a former slave port,
40 President George W. Bush acknowledged slavery's continuing legacy in American life and
41 the need to confront that legacy when he stated that slavery "was . . . one of the greatest
42 crimes of history . . . The racial bigotry fed by slavery did not end with slavery or with
43 segregation. And many of the issues that still trouble America have roots in the bitter
44 experience of other times. But however long the journey, our destiny is set: liberty and
45 justice for all"; and

46 WHEREAS, to address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of
47 slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865, a federal
48 commission needs to be established to study and consider proposals for reparations for the
49 institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination
50 against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to
51 make recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes.

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
53 the members of this body reaffirm their opposition to racial discrimination.

54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Georgia House of Representatives hereby expresses
55 support for the creation by the 117th United States Congress of a commission to study and
56 develop reparation proposals for African Americans.

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
58 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to each
59 member of the Georgia congressional delegation, the public, and the press.