

## House Resolution 638

By: Representatives Jasperse of the 11<sup>th</sup> and Hatchett of the 155<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Commending the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of  
2 Cherokee Indians, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the historical tribes that once  
3 called Georgia their home, including the Yuchi Tribe, Chickasaw Nation, Miccosukee Tribe  
4 of Indians of Florida, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Seminole Nation Shawnee Tribe, and all  
5 tribes; and for other purposes.

6 WHEREAS, the ancestors of today's Southeastern tribes and other Native peoples have for  
7 millennia inhabited the lands of the present day State of Georgia. The Lower Muscogee  
8 Creek, a major tribe, occupied towns on the Fall Line, the Piedmont, and coastal plain areas.  
9 They were not one tribe but several tribes that formed a powerful confederacy. The  
10 Cherokee, another major tribe, occupied the mountains of northern Georgia; and

11 WHEREAS, the arrival and settlement of General James Oglethorpe, founder of the Colony  
12 of Georgia, opened a new chapter in the histories of the Native peoples of said territory; and

13 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia acknowledges the significant role that the Native  
14 Americans played in permitting the birth of this colony to take root, such as Tomochichi, a  
15 local Yamacraw Creek chief who welcomed the new arrivals. On August 21, 1739, General  
16 James Oglethorpe, because of Tomochichi's diplomatic role, visited Coweta Town on the

17 Chattahoochee River, capital of the Lower Muscogee Creek Nation, a tribe important in the  
18 history of the young colony, and there signed the Treaty of Coweta, cementing a document  
19 promoting peace and friendship between all Native tribes and the colony; and

20 WHEREAS, in 1801, the first mission school to the Cherokee and the Lower Muscogee  
21 Creek was established at Spring Place, Georgia. The Moravian mission became a model for  
22 ministry, education, and farming techniques, and in subsequent years, a friend and ally to the  
23 chiefs and tribal heads at New Echota, capital of the Cherokee Nation; and

24 WHEREAS, on November 12, 1825, New Echota was officially designated as the capital of  
25 the Cherokee Nation, and the tribal council also began a building program that included  
26 construction of a two-story council house, a supreme court, and later, the office of the first  
27 Indian-language newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, which used the new syllabary created by  
28 the Cherokee scholar Sequoyah; and

29 WHEREAS, the Native American sovereign rights to their land and nations were confirmed  
30 by the United States Supreme Court in the case of Worcester vs. Georgia, in which Chief  
31 Justice John Marshall opined that all Muscogee Creek land east of the Mississippi is that of  
32 nations and that the federal government had the sole right to deal with the Indian nations in  
33 North America. Justice Marshall also clearly stated that neither the states nor the federal  
34 government had the right of possession to Native lands nor political dominion over the laws  
35 enacted by Native peoples; and

36 WHEREAS, in subsequent years prior to 1830, relationships with all Native tribes began to  
37 deteriorate. In 1826, the Treaty of Washington was signed, which ceded to the United States  
38 all Muscogee Creek land east of the Mississippi River. The passage of the Indian Removal  
39 Act of 1830 initiated the removal of the Native peoples from Georgia beginning with the

40 Lower Muscogee Creek, thus perpetrating the removal of approximately 17,000 Creeks to  
41 the Oklahoma Territory. Georgia then included Cherokee territory in its Sixth Land Lottery,  
42 allocating Cherokee land to white settlers, although the Cherokee Nation had never ceded the  
43 land to the state; over the next six years, the Georgia Guard operated against the Cherokees,  
44 evicting them from their properties; by 1834, New Echota was becoming a ghost town, and  
45 council meetings were moved to Red Clay, Cherokee Nation, now in Tennessee; and

46 WHEREAS, as the General Assembly recalled in a 1997 resolution dedicating the Trail of  
47 Tears Highway: "New Echota was converted from the capital of a nation to a holding pen for  
48 the human inhabitants of that nation as they were rounded up and corralled like cattle to  
49 embark on one of the most sordid chapters in our states history, the forced migration of the  
50 Cherokee people from their native Southeastern foothills and mountains to Oklahoma, an  
51 event that lives in infamy as the Trail of Tears"; and

52 WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land, which we  
53 are sworn to protect and uphold; and

54 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper for members of this body to recognize the  
55 importance of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, the United Keetoowah Band  
56 of Cherokee Indians, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the historical tribes such as  
57 the Yuchi Tribe, Chickasaw Nation, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Tribe  
58 of Florida Indians, and the Shawnee Tribe to the rich history of this state and our nation; and

59 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
60 the members of this body, in honor of Native American Honoring Day, commend the  
61 Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians,  
62 Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the historical tribes, including the Yuchi Tribe,

63 Chickasaw Nation, Miccosukee Tribe of Florida Indians, Seminole Tribe of Florida Indians,  
64 the Shawnee Tribe, and all tribes.

65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body proclaim, "LET US GO  
66 DOWN TO THE RIVER, LET US BURY THE HATCHET AND PLANT THE TREE OF  
67 PEACE!"

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
69 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the  
70 public and the press.