

2022 -- H 7325

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

HOUSE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING THE 252ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE
FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT ON FEBRUARY 3, 2022

Introduced By: Representatives Potter, Abney, Ranglin-Vassell, Williams, Filippi,
Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Morales, Hull, and J Lombardi

Date Introduced: February 03, 2022

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, As the American Civil War was entering its final stages, thought within the
2 Union turned to the issue of how to reconstruct the American South and return the region to being
3 part of a united nation once again. The end result was the passage of the Reconstruction Acts, the
4 Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, with all
5 being adopted between 1865 and 1870; and

6 WHEREAS, The Thirteenth Amendment, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery and
7 involuntary servitude, and the Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, provided for full
8 citizenship rights and equal protection of the laws for all Americans; and

9 WHEREAS, Despite the end of the Civil War and Slavery, most southern states tried to
10 return former slaves to something similar to their former status by instituting the infamous “Black
11 Codes” which restricted the freed slaves right to free movement, forced them into unfair year-
12 long labor contracts, impinged on their rights from testifying in court, as well as voting and many
13 other limitations on their freedoms; and

14 WHEREAS, In response to these assaults on liberty and freedom, forces in Congress
15 began working on a constitutional amendment to protect black voting rights. United States
16 Representative John Bingham of Ohio led the charge, and a compromise amendment banning
17 voting restrictions based on race, color or previous condition of servitude passed the United
18 States House of Representatives on February 25, 1869, and the United States Senate the following
19 day; and

1 WHEREAS, With the strong support of President Ulysses S. Grant, all of the New
2 England States, including Rhode Island's ratification on January 18th, 1870, and most of the
3 Midwest States, the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution protecting Black
4 voting rights from Federal or State encroachment, was finally ratified on February 3, 1870; now,
5 therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
7 commemorates the 252nd Anniversary of the ratification of the Fifteenth amendment to the
8 United States Constitution on February 3rd, 2022; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
10 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of
11 the United States, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, and the Honorable Daniel R.
12 McKee, Governor of the State of Rhode Island.

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