

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

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By: **Delegates Vaughn, Barnes, Branch, Davis, Healey, Hixson, Holmes, Ivey, Levi, Niemann, Oaks, Ross, Valderrama, Vallario, and Walker**

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Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Slavery in Maryland**

3 FOR the purpose of expressing regret for the role that Maryland played in instituting  
4 and maintaining slavery and for the discrimination that was slavery's legacy.

5 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland relied on slavery for 200 years; and

6 WHEREAS, To meet the needs of its economy, Maryland prior to 1808 imported  
7 men, women, and children, torn from their homes in Africa and subjected to the  
8 brutality of the Middle Passage; and

9 WHEREAS, Maryland citizens trafficked in human flesh until the adoption of  
10 the Constitution of 1864; and

11 WHEREAS, Slavery subjected its victims to unspeakable cruelties, including  
12 beatings, rape, and the forcible separation of family members from one another; and

13 WHEREAS, A native of Maryland, nurtured by the slave culture of our State,  
14 wrote the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision declaring African Americans incapable  
15 of citizenship because they had "no rights which the white man was bound to respect";  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Slavery fostered a climate of oppression not only for slaves and  
18 their descendants but also for people of color who moved to Maryland subsequent to  
19 slavery's abolition; and



**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4**

1           WHEREAS, Slavery's legacy has afflicted the citizens of our State down to the  
2 present; and

3           WHEREAS, Slavery and discrimination are utterly contrary to the principles  
4 that this Nation and this State profess; and

5           WHEREAS, It is time for the State of Maryland to acknowledge the role the  
6 State played in maintaining the institution of slavery and its attendant evils; now,  
7 therefore, be it

8           **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND**, That the State  
9 of Maryland expresses profound regret for the role that Maryland played in instituting  
10 and maintaining slavery and for the discrimination that was slavery's legacy; and be it  
11 further

12           **RESOLVED**, That the State of Maryland commits itself to the formation of a  
13 more perfect union among its citizens regardless of color, creed, or race; and be it  
14 further

15           **RESOLVED**, That the State of Maryland recommits itself to the principle that  
16 all people are equal and equally endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and  
17 the pursuit of happiness.