



SJ0044

LRB095 11803 KXB 34806 r

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois, at the time of its
3 acceptance into the Union in 1818 and for a longtime
4 thereafter, practiced de facto slavery masqueraded as
5 "indentured servitude"; the census of 1840 enumerated slaves in
6 Illinois in violation of the Ordinance of 1787, which outlawed
7 slavery in the Northwest Territories; and

8 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois passed the infamous and
9 unjust Black Laws (1819), otherwise known as the Black Codes,
10 which were a denial of human rights designed to cover up
11 slavery and the slave trade within the borders of the State;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois supported the Black Codes
14 for more than forty-six years until they were finally repealed;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, In the State of Illinois the majority of Illinois
17 citizens favored closing the State to African-American
18 residents and withholding the right of citizenship from those
19 African-American residents already living in the State; and

20 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois passed dehumanizing laws
21 stating that slaves were not persons, but property, and as

1 property the ownership of enslaved Africans was to be fully
2 protected by Illinois law; and

3 WHEREAS, For many years, Black people, free or otherwise,
4 had no legal status as citizens in the State of Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, The East St. Louis massacre on July 2, 1917 was
6 the scene of violent attacks on the Black populace; a bitter
7 and destructive riot ran on for nearly a week; 312 buildings
8 were destroyed; some reports claimed 39 African-Americans were
9 killed, while another source reported 200 to 300 deaths,
10 including women and children; and

11 WHEREAS, On August 14 and 15, 1908, a riot broke out in the
12 State Capital of Springfield; Scott Burton was lynched during
13 the riot and Joe James was lynched after the riot; there were
14 lootings, buildings and property were destroyed, and Walter
15 Donegan was hung in a tree, his throat slit open, and his body
16 mutilated; and

17 WHEREAS, Chicago faced a riot in the week of July 27
18 through August 2, 1919; one of the country's most violent and
19 racially motivated attacks on Blacks occurred; 38 people were
20 killed, 537 were injured, and 1,000 people found themselves
21 homeless; and

1 WHEREAS, The Chicago Commission on Race Relations rendered
2 a full report studying the Black Community (The Negro in
3 Chicago) and ignored studies of the white offenders and their
4 communities; and

5 WHEREAS, The racial altercations throughout the State of
6 Illinois during the turbulent decade of the 1960's resulted in
7 the Kerner Commission Report, or The Report of the National
8 Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders; and

9 WHEREAS, There is a need for special investigations into
10 the unknown number of African-Americans killed during race
11 riots in the State of Illinois; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
13 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
14 CONCURRING HEREIN, that a special commission, to be known as
15 the Illinois Riot and Reparations Commission, be formed to
16 study historical events in the State of Illinois, particularly
17 those events that resulted in the loss of African-American
18 lives and property; and that if the study presented by the
19 Commission warrants a second commission be formed to look into
20 the payment of reparations to the survivors and their
21 descendants; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Commission be made up of four members of

1 the Illinois Senate, two to be chosen by the President of the
2 Senate, and two to be chosen by the Senate Minority Leader;
3 four members of the Illinois House of Representatives, two to
4 be chosen by the Speaker of the House, and two to be chosen by
5 the House Minority Leader; the Executive Director of the
6 Illinois Human Rights Commission, or his or her designee, and
7 the Director of the Illinois State Historical Society, or his
8 or her designee; all of whom shall serve without compensation
9 but shall be reimbursed for their reasonable and necessary
10 expenses; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall meet at the call of the
12 President of the Senate and shall make a report of its findings
13 to the General Assembly no later than January 7, 2009, and upon
14 making its report shall be dissolved; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
16 delivered to the Executive Director of the Illinois Human
17 Rights Commission and the Director of the Illinois State
18 Historical Society.