

2020 -- H 7643

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THE RHODE ISLAND SLAVE HISTORY MEDALLION STATEWIDE
EDUCATION PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Carson, Abney, Almeida, Hull, and Williams

Date Introduced: February 25, 2020

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island Slave History Medallions is a non-profit statewide public
2 awareness program committed to educating the Rhode Island public about the state's role in the
3 slave trade during the colonial period from 1638 to 1843, and marking with slave history
4 medallions those historic Rhode Island sites that were connected to the transatlantic slave trade;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Tragically, Rhode Island played a significant part in the slave trade through
7 its role in building, owning, sailing, and insuring slave ships, making the slave trade a major part
8 of the Rhode Island economy during this period. Rhode Islanders also distilled molasses into rum
9 and built the barrels for the rum that was used in the slave trade. Rhode Islanders also owned
10 sugar plantations in Cuba and Barbados that used and exploited African and Native American
11 slaves, shipped agricultural commodities to the Caribbean which allowed the slave plantations to
12 stay in operation, and even manufactured iron chains and manacles for the slave trade; and

13 WHEREAS, To be eligible for a Rhode Island Slave History Medallion, a site must have
14 verifiable evidence of a connection to the slave trade history in Rhode Island. Sites selected can
15 be public or private. They can be homes, offices and work sites of those that were involved in the
16 slave trade. It can also be sites where slaves lived and/or labored as well as sites that were
17 connected to government officials who shaped the policies of the slave trade in Rhode Island; and

18 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island History Medallions Project will make the history of the
19 Slave Trade in Rhode Island more accessible to Rhode Islanders. The Medallions placed at slave-

1 related historical localities serve as awareness educational symbols. In the words of Mr. Lonnie
2 B. Bunch, III, 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian, "Let us use history to inspire us to push a
3 country forward, to help us believe that all things are possible and to demand a country lives up to
4 its stated ideals"; now, therefore be it

5 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
6 Providence Plantations hereby recognizes the Rhode Island Slave History Medallions awareness
7 program and we hope all Rhode Islanders will take some time to learn more about this important
8 part of Rhode Island history; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
10 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Charles Roberts, Chairman, Rhode Island
11 Slave History Medallions.

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