**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEMORATE THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE TOWN OF MITCHELVILLE ON HILTON HEAD ISLAND, AN EVENT THAT SIGNALED THE DAWN OF LIBERTY FOR ENSLAVED AFRICANS IN THE SEA ISLANDS.

Whereas, the House of Representatives is pleased to learn that Mitchelville, a town on Hilton Head Island replete with important South Carolina history, is celebrating its one hundred fiftieth anniversary this year; and

Whereas, the scene was set for the founding of Mitchelville during the Civil War when Union forces occupied Hilton Head Island in 1861 and established the Department of the South; and

Whereas, in 1862, General Ormsby M. Mitchel, commander of the Department of the South, issued an order designating a section of land (later called Mitchelville in his honor) that was to be a place where former African slaves living on Hilton Head Island and those who had come seeking freedom would live and for the first time have an opportunity to elect representatives and conduct their own affairs. In this place, its inhabitants experienced freedom and the right to vote and govern for well over a decade; and

Whereas, led by the Reverend Abraham Murchison, the residents of Mitchelville built homes; elected representatives who established a compulsory education law; began two churches, the First African Baptist Church in 1862 and Queen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1865, both of which exist today; negotiated wages for their work at the Department of the South; farmed; and created commercial enterprises, including land co‑ops. In addition, the men of the town offered themselves for military service in the war; and

Whereas, the Mitchelville Preservation Project, a volunteer body of citizens, has dedicated itself to the redevelopment of historic Mitchelville. Its worthy goal: to commemorate General Mitchel and the former enslaved Africans who seized the opportunity of obtaining freedom and conducted the affairs of a town in the midst of war at a pivotal point in American history, all prior to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives takes great pleasure in recognizing the one hundredth fiftieth anniversary of Mitchelville, and the members commend the Mitchelville Preservation Project for its efforts to promote this South Carolina freedom chronicle throughout the schools of this great State to the end that all South Carolinians might be inspired by its story. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Rep

resentatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and commemorate the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Town of Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island, an event that signaled the dawn of liberty for enslaved Africans in the Sea Islands.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Mitchelville Preservation Project.

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