

## 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  
6 in Illinois in violation of the Ordinance of 1787, which  
7 outlawed 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  
15 repealed; and

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

21 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois passed dehumanizing laws  
22 stating that slaves were not persons, but property, and as  
23 property the ownership of enslaved Africans was to be fully  
24 protected by Illinois law; and

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

28 WHEREAS, The East St. Louis massacre on July 2, 1917 was  
29 the scene of violent attacks on the Black populace; a bitter  
30 and destructive riot ran on for nearly a week; 312 buildings  
31 were destroyed; some reports claimed 39 African-Americans

1 were killed, while another source reported 200 to 300 deaths,  
2 including women and children; and

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

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

14 WHEREAS, The Chicago Commission on Race Relations  
15 rendered a full report studying the Black Community (The  
16 Negro in Chicago) and ignored studies of the white offenders  
17 and their communities; and

18 WHEREAS, The racial altercations throughout the State of  
19 Illinois during the turbulent decade of the 1960's resulted  
20 in the Kerner Commission Report, or The Report of the  
21 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders; and

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

25 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL  
26 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF  
27 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that a special commission,  
28 to be known as the Illinois Riot and Reparations Commission,  
29 be formed to study historical events in the State of  
30 Illinois, particularly those events that resulted in the loss  
31 of African-American lives and property; and that if the study

1 presented by the Commission warrants a second commission be  
2 formed to look into the payment of reparations to the  
3 survivors and their descendants; and be it further

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

15 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall meet at the call of  
16 the President of the Senate, and shall make a report of its  
17 findings to the General Assembly no later than January 10,  
18 2002, and upon making its report shall be dissolved; and be  
19 it further

20 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
21 delivered to the Executive Director of the Illinois Human  
22 Rights Commission and the Director of the Illinois State  
23 Historical Society.