SENATE RESOLUTION

8699

By Senator Braun

WHEREAS, Washington state recognizes important contributions made to the development of the state by early settlers and pioneers; and

WHEREAS, The people of Centralia and this state are celebrating the 200th birthday of the African-American pioneer George Washington; and

WHEREAS, The young George Washington and his adoptive parents, Anna and James Cochran, repeatedly struggled against racial discrimination in the east, and made the dangerous trek across the Oregon Trail to settle in what was then the Oregon Territory; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Washington settled along the Chehalis River in 1852, running a pole ferry across the Chehalis River and hosting travelers along the major road through the new territory; and

WHEREAS, He and his wife, Mary Jane, founded the town now known as Centralia in 1875, donated to churches, gave his city a public square, and fostered not just a town but a community; and

WHEREAS, He was a man of great Christian faith and provided aid to fellow settlers who had fallen onto hard times, which fostered his reputation as a caring neighbor, an astute businessman, a savvy farmer, and a man of generosity; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Washington further developed his area of residence by providing affordable building lots at fair prices to incoming settlers; and

WHEREAS, When Centralia struggled economically during the Panic of 1893, Mr. Washington used his personal wealth to support his friends and neighbors with a generous and open heart, in keeping with his personal motto of "peace and plenty"; and

WHEREAS, He has no living descendants, but the aid and mentorship he provided to his community made him a father in spirit to all residents of Centralia; and

WHEREAS, His compassion, generosity, and steadfast nature shaped the town of Centralia throughout his life and even after his death; and

WHEREAS, The people of Centralia are honoring their pioneer founder in his bicentennial year with activities, celebrations, and the dedication on August 11, 2018, of a new bronze statue in his honor;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate honors George Washington in his bicentennial year as an important figure in Northwest history; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Senate acknowledge the legacy of Mr. Washington, whose efforts have created a culture of neighborliness in his community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the City Council of Centralia and the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners.