SENATE RESOLUTION

8618

By Senator O'Ban

WHEREAS, The United States of America was founded on the principles embodied in our Declaration of Independence: That all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of government, as defined by our Declaration, is to secure these rights; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans were denied these rights by the practice of slavery, starting in 1619 when the first African immigrants were brought in captivity to Jamestown, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, In order to create a union of United States, compromises were made by the colonies and slavery continued to deny black Americans their individual rights and dignity, split families, and debase the American values enshrined in the Declaration; and

WHEREAS, The abolitionist sentiments that were present at the founding of the country multiplied under the influence of the American spiritual revival of the 1820s known as the second great awakening, leading to the creation of religious organizations dedicated to changing culture and law in order to bring about emancipation; and

WHEREAS, Despite violent threats and actions against them, these abolitionist organizations continued exercising their religious freedoms and rights of conscience; uniting freedmen, former slaves, women, and white abolitionists in the anti-slavery cause; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln was nominated by his new party as their nominee for president in 1860; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln, whose direct influence on and connection to Washington state was noted in Senate Resolution 8623 in February of 2009, refused to allow further expansion of slavery or the dissolution of the union; and

WHEREAS, An eighth of our population was in bondage and that bondage was concentrated in the southern part of the United States, and fierce interests sought to strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest [slavery] even at the cost of a civil war; and

WHEREAS, In 1863, when confronted with rebellion, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation as a wartime measure to free slaves in rebel territory, and acted upon his belief that a "government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free" by urging his party in 1864 to approve a platform that read in part, "the principles of Republican Government, justice and the National safety demand its [slavery's] utter and complete extirpation from the soil of the Republic; and

WHEREAS, In order to ensure the sacrifices of the Union would not be in vain, and that the nation would resolve the issue of slavery once and for all in favor of emancipation, President Lincoln worked tirelessly to ensure the passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which abolished slavery forever in the United States;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize the 152nd anniversary of the Congress of the United States passing the 13th Amendment on January 31, 1865, and celebrate this milestone on the path to the realization of the principle expressed in the Declaration that "all men are created equal."