

SENATE RESOLUTION

8674

By Senators Hunt, Lovick, Van De Wege, Valdez, Salomon, Wagoner, Padden, Braun, Torres, Short, Robinson, Billig, Hansen, Shewmake, Schoesler, Rivers, L. Wilson, Warnick, Hawkins, McCune, Dozier, Gildon, Holy, MacEwen, Liiias, Wellman, Nobles, Keiser, Kuderer, Fortunato, Pedersen, Conway, Hasegawa, Trudeau, J. Wilson, Boehnke, King, and Cleveland

1 WHEREAS, The Territory of Washington was created by the act of
2 congress and approved by President Millard Fillmore on March 2, 1853;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, A proclamation issued by newly appointed Governor Isaac
5 I. Stevens established the government of Washington Territory under
6 the terms of the organic act passed by congress in 1853, and
7 designated the city of Olympia, which had been established on the
8 southernmost part of Puget Sound on the traditional lands of the
9 Squaxin Tribe, as the temporary Territorial Capital; and

10 WHEREAS, 170 years ago, on Monday, February 27, 1854, pursuant to
11 the gubernatorial proclamation, the first legislative assembly of the
12 Territory of Washington composed of a nine-member council and an 18-
13 member House of representatives, convened; and

14 WHEREAS, Lacking a suitable capitol building, the Territorial
15 Assembly of 1854 assembled on the second floor of the Parker & Colter
16 store on main street (now capitol way) in Olympia; and

17 WHEREAS, The legislators, elected on January 30, 1854, from the
18 eight counties, were a reflection of their communities and included
19 farmers, mercantilists, lawyers, and other occupations; and

20 WHEREAS, The First Territorial Assembly of 1854, limited to a
21 100-day session, closed with only 36 days to spare adjourning sine
22 die May 1, 1854, having lasted 64 days; and

1 WHEREAS, The First Territorial Assembly accomplished more
2 than expected, including outlining criminal and civil codes;
3 creating a school system; authorizing construction and
4 maintenance of infrastructure such as wharves and roads; setting
5 marriage and divorce standards; establishing new counties and
6 county offices; expanding the House by an additional four
7 representatives; and adopting a territorial seal; and

8 WHEREAS, The progress and success of the First Territorial
9 Assembly would not have been possible without the assistance and
10 enthusiastic support of Olympia, the city's 300 to 400
11 residents, surrounding communities, and local business
12 interests;

13 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate honor and
14 remember the First Washington Territorial Legislature of 1854 as
15 well as the contributions of the local communities, both native
16 and nonnative alike, which allowed this democratic institution
17 to gain a foothold and later flourish in the furthest reaches of
18 the Nation; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
20 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the
21 Honorable Dontae Payne, Mayor of Olympia, the Honorable Kris
22 Peters, Chair, Squaxin Tribe, and Mr. Greg Griffith, President,
23 Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum.

24 I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate,
25 do hereby certify that this is a true and
26 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8674,
27 adopted by the Senate
28 February 27, 2024

29 SARAH BANNISTER
30 Secretary of the Senate