

1 **..Title**

2 **Slavery – 1619 – The Beginning of America’s Unforgettable Sin** – For the purpose of recognizing the
3 beginning of an excruciatingly horrendous period in the history of America and in the history of the City
4 of Annapolis that began exactly 400 years ago in 1619; recognizing the unbelievable pain that continues;
5 and pledging to chart a path moving forward.

6 **..Body**

7 **CITY COUNCIL OF THE**
8 **City of Annapolis**

9
10 **Resolution R-47-19**

11
12 **Introduced by: Alderwoman Pindell Charles, Alderwoman Tierney,**
13 **Mayor Buckley, Alderman Rodriguez, Alderman Gay, Alderman Savidge,**
14 **Alderwoman Finlayson, and Alderman Arnett**

15
16 **A RESOLUTION** concerning

17
18 **Slavery – 1619 – The Beginning of America’s Unforgettable Sin**
19

20 **FOR** the purpose of recognizing the beginning of an excruciatingly horrendous period in the
21 history of America and in the history of the City of Annapolis that began exactly 400 years
22 ago in 1619; recognizing the unbelievable pain that continues; and pledging to chart a path
23 moving forward.

24
25 **WHEREAS,** The first 19 or so Africans to reach the English colonies, many from Sub-Sahara
26 Africa, arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619, were brought here to these shores
27 in bondage by English privateers who seized them from their African homeland;
28 and

29
30 **WHEREAS,** This practice has also been described as “The MAAFA, which is a Kiswahili term
31 for "terrible occurrence" or "great disaster," and has also been referenced by very
32 well respected scholars as “The Black Holocaust” when millions of Africans died
33 during the journey of captivity from the west coast of Africa to the shores of
34 America, known as the Middle Passage”; and

35
36 **WHEREAS,** Slavery—human trafficking—became the legal institution of human chattel in
37 America; and

38
39 **WHEREAS,** Slaves were treated as legal forms of property and could be bought, sold, or given
40 away like any other personal property, and, such as a horse, could be worked and
41 bred; and

42
43 **WHEREAS,** Slaves were required to perform harsh and backbreaking work, combined with
44 suffering from inadequate nutrition and bad water, unbearable and extreme weather

1 conditions, exhaustion, health and environmental challenges, such as diseases that
2 preyed upon their compromised immune systems, extreme mental and emotional
3 anguish, the forced separation of families—husbands from their wives and children,
4 mothers from their own children who were then forced to care for their masters’
5 children, etc.—along with their inability to move freely, among many, many other
6 hardships; and
7

8 **WHEREAS,** These harsh conditions increased slave resistance and, therefore, led owners,
9 masters, and overseers to rely upon violence for control of their slaves, imposing
10 intimidation, fear, and terror, and using extreme physical punishment upon them,
11 such as whipping, shackling, hanging, beating, torture, burning, mutilation,
12 branding, imprisonment, execution, and even lynching; and
13

14 **WHEREAS,** Our U.S. Constitution sanctioned and condoned slavery, servitude, and human
15 bondage as evidenced by the “Fugitive Slave Clause” (Section 2 of Article IV) and
16 the “Three-Fifths Compromise (Section 2 of Article I); and
17

18 **WHEREAS,** Likewise, many colonies and states enacted local codes and laws that sanctioned
19 and condoned slavery, servitude, and human bondage, including, but not limited to,
20 anti-literacy, unlawful assembly, and owning firearms; and
21

22 **WHEREAS,** Many of America’s founding fathers, U.S. Presidents, and prominent politicians
23 and leaders bought, sold, and gave away slaves, and personally were also a part of
24 the breeding process themselves; and
25

26 **WHEREAS,** Throughout history, the “conflicted dilemma” of slavery continued to invoke
27 inordinate discussions as to how to reconcile or justify or explain this very
28 unexplainable and “peculiar institution”; and
29

30 **WHEREAS,** One of the most acceptable and notable practices of maintaining slavery, servitude,
31 and human bondage was to ensure that slaves remained illiterate, unable to read
32 and write, and uninformed; and
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34 **WHEREAS,** Our own City of Annapolis was not absolved from this cruel and inhumane practice
35 of slavery—being a very proactive perpetuator and participant in promoting the
36 slave trade; and
37

38 **WHEREAS,** Annapolis was recently designated as a "Site of Memory associated with the Slave
39 Route Project" by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
40 Organization; and
41

42 **WHEREAS,** Annapolis is one of 42 locations across the continental United States and one of
43 five sites in the State of Maryland identified as being a Middle Passage port of
44 entry, a place where children, women, and men in bondage first placed their feet
45 after leaving the continent of Africa; and
46

- 1 **WHEREAS,** A historic marker will be placed at the Annapolis City Dock that will commemorate
2 the lives of enslaved Africans—those who perished and those who survived—who
3 were forced to endure the arduous and extraordinarily and unbelievably long trans-
4 Atlantic journey known as the Middle Passage; and
5
- 6 **WHEREAS,** The sale of human beings and forced slave labor built the early economy of this
7 City—a city that has been the capital of the State of Maryland since 1695 and a city
8 that also served as the capital of this newly formed American nation in 1783; and
9
- 10 **WHEREAS,** Enslaved Africans and their descendants were denied equal and equitable
11 ownership in the development of this Country based upon immoral, unrighteous,
12 and baseless scientific theories and beliefs; and
13
- 14 **WHEREAS,** Discrimination caused inequities and a lack of upward mobility for the descendants
15 of these enslaved Africans; and
16
- 17 **WHEREAS,** The end of the Civil War, which was 250 years after the first slaves arrived in
18 America, followed by Emancipation, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement,
19 and other progressive movements, resulted in some significant gains, nevertheless,
20 the question must be asked: “How much progress can be made by formerly enslaved
21 people, who continued to suffer discrimination post-emancipation, if people, who
22 have always been free are progressing steadily?”; and
23
- 24 **WHEREAS,** We must all accept and learn from this extraordinarily painful history of our
25 Country, our State, our County, and our City; and
26
- 27 **WHEREAS,** The result of these past practices continue to negatively affect the descendants of
28 these enslaved Africans throughout our Country; and
29
- 30 **WHEREAS,** Quoting the Spanish philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist George Santayana in
31 a 1948 speech to the House of Commons, Winston Churchill changed Mr.
32 Santayana’s quote slightly when he said (paraphrasing), “Those who fail to learn
33 from history are condemned to repeat it.”; and
34
- 35 **WHEREAS,** Learning this history, as not to repeat it, assists our City greatly in recognizing that
36 we are then mandated to pursue and assist in pursuing “liberty and justice for all”
37 Annapolitans in every aspect of daily life; and
38
- 39 **WHEREAS,** The Mayor and City Council are and should be at the forefront of supporting this
40 Resolution on this 400th anniversary of this most painful part of our past; and
41
- 42 **WHEREAS,** The Mayor and City Council mark this moment in time, by honoring those millions
43 of Africans and African Americans who lost their lives to the scourge of slavery
44 and those who suffered unimaginably at the hands of domestic terrorists acting
45 solely upon racist motivations; and
46

1 **WHEREAS,** The Mayor and City Council desire to continue to pursue a path toward a “One
2 Annapolis”—where we listen and communicate with one another with respect,
3 understanding, civility, and dignity; and
4

5 **WHEREAS,** The Mayor and City Council hereby pledge to chart a path moving forward.
6

7 **NOW, THEREFORE,**
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9 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the Mayor and City Council
10 support this Resolution on this 400th anniversary of slavery in America.
11

12 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the
13 Mayor and City Council desire to continue to pursue a path toward a “One Annapolis”—where we
14 listen and communicate with one another with respect, civility, and dignity.
15

16 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that this
17 Resolution, “Slavery – 1619 – The Beginning of America’s Unforgettable Sin”, is hereby
18 approved.
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