



Abraham Lincoln Subcommittee

Work Plan for HB 527 (2012)

History of Slavery in America

"Slavery is one of the greatest crimes of history, and its legacy still vexes the United States . . . Small men took on the powers and airs of tyrants and masters. Years of unpunished brutality and bullying and rape produced a dullness and hardness of conscience. Christian men and women became blind to the clearest commands of their faith and added hypocrisy to injustice. While physical slavery is dead, the legacy is alive. My nation's journey toward justice has not been easy, and it is not over. For racial bigotry fed by slavery did not end with slavery or with segregation . . . and many of the issues that still trouble America have roots in the bitter experience of other times . . . But however long the journey, our destiny is set: liberty and justice for all."

-- **President George W. Bush, during a trip to Goree Island, Senegal, a former slave port, in 2003**

During the 2012 Session of the General Assembly, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission was directed to incorporate the objectives of House Bill 527, (Delegate McQuinn), into its work. House Bill 527 would address the contemporary political, economic, educational, and societal issues and public policies whose roots lie in the transatlantic slave trade.

Other issues involve:

- (i) identifying the vestiges and assessing the effects of the transatlantic slave trade on African Americans, the Commonwealth, and modern societal problems and public policies;
- (ii) exploring and showcasing the contributions of African Americans in building Virginia and the nation;
- (iii) determining the educational and economic value to the Commonwealth of preserving sites and facilities of historic and archaeological significance to African American culture and contributions; and
- (iv) recommending feasible and appropriate options to resolve lingering societal problems whose roots lie in slavery.

The staff proposes that the Commission use a thematic approach and organize the study according to the objectives outlined in HB 527 (2012), to the extent the objectives are consistent with the governing statute for the Commission.

October 23, 2013--Overview of Slavery in America

Continued

November 2013--Educational and Societal Issues

- Assess the extent to which students and the public are knowledgeable concerning African American history, the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in the Commonwealth and the nation, and the contributions of African Americans to American society and the world;
- Determine whether and the extent to which African American history, information concerning the African slave trade, slavery and its impact on and legacy in American society, and the achievements and contributions of African Americans to the development of the Commonwealth and the nation are integrated into the Standards of Learning, textbooks, and statewide student assessments;

December 2013: Contemporary Political and Economic Issues

- Inventory relevant African American historical sites, memorials, exhibits, and resources in the Commonwealth and assess the potential economic impact of tourism and economic development promotion relative to such sites;
- Develop and maintain a roster of volunteer historians, educators, businesses, organizations, and speakers to act as resource persons for classroom teachers on African American history, the African slave trade, American slavery, the impact of slavery on modern society, and the contributions of African Americans to the Commonwealth and the nation;

April 2013: Public Policies and other Vestiges of Slavery

- Provide appropriate memorialization of the events concerning the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in America, as well as their struggle for freedom and liberty through such venues as workshops, conferences, institutes, seminars, internships, professional teacher development, and other programs and activities;
- Promote the identification, preservation, and conservation of historic sites significant to the presence and contributions of enslaved Africans in Virginia;

May 2013: Findings and Options**June 2013: Public Town Hall****July 2013: Recommendations**