

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2013

**H.J.R. 148**  
**Feb 25, 2013**  
**HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK**

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR30080-LG-50 (02/13)

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Sponsors: Representative Stam.

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Referred to:

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1 A JOINT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE RECOVERY OF NORTH  
2 CAROLINA'S BILL OF RIGHTS.

3 Whereas, in 1787, delegates met during a Constitutional Convention held in  
4 Philadelphia to adopt a proposed Constitution; and

5 Whereas, North Carolina's delegates to the Convention included William Blount of  
6 Pitt County, Richard Dobbs Spaight, Sr. of Craven County, and Hugh Williamson of Chowan  
7 County, all of whom signed the Constitution; and

8 Whereas, after the Constitutional Convention, state conventions were called to vote  
9 on the ratification of the proposed United States Constitution; and

10 Whereas, in 1788, North Carolina assembled a State convention in Hillsborough to  
11 consider ratification of the Constitution; and

12 Whereas, Willie Jones, a delegate to the State convention helped to persuade the  
13 other delegates to oppose ratification of the Constitution because the document did not contain  
14 sufficient protections for individual rights and, on August 2, 1788, the delegates at the  
15 Convention declined to ratify the proposed Constitution; and

16 Whereas, on June 8, 1789, James Madison introduced to the first United States  
17 Congress amendments to the Constitution that would result in a Bill of Rights; and

18 Whereas, on October 2, 1789, President George Washington sent to all the states an  
19 original copy of the 12 proposed constitutional amendments adopted by Congress; and

20 Whereas, on November 21, 1789, in a second convention held in Fayetteville, North  
21 Carolina became the 12th state to ratify the Constitution and, on December 22, 1789, the  
22 General Assembly voted to ratify all 12 proposed amendments; and

23 Whereas, three-fourths of the state legislatures ratified 10 of the 12 proposed  
24 amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights; and

25 Whereas, in April 1865, during the occupation of Raleigh by Union forces, North  
26 Carolina's copy of the Bill of Rights was stolen from the Capitol; and

27 Whereas, over the ensuing years several attempts were made to sell the copy of the  
28 Bill of Rights back to North Carolina, but the State steadfastly refused to buy back what  
29 rightfully belonged to its citizens; and

30 Whereas, on March 18, 2003, when the document was offered for sale in  
31 Philadelphia, North Carolina's Bill of Rights was seized by federal authorities in a joint federal  
32 and State effort; and

33 Whereas, on March 24, 2008, after five years of litigation in federal and state courts  
34 and 143 years of being out of the custody of the State, the Wake County Superior Court  
35 declared North Carolina to be the rightful owner of the copy of the Bill of Rights; and



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1           Whereas, the Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of the freedoms we cherish as  
2 American citizens; Now, therefore,

3 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

4           **SECTION 1.** That on this day, March 18, 2013, the 10th anniversary of the joint  
5 federal and State effort to return to North Carolina its copy of the Bill of Rights, we take note  
6 of the milestone and commend the efforts of those involved in the pursuit and recovery of the  
7 document.

8           **SECTION 2.** That the General Assembly honors the memory of the early founders  
9 of this country, including those named in this resolution, for their role in helping to guarantee  
10 the citizens of this country the freedoms enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

11           **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.