

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

4738--A

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I N S E N A T E

April 27, 2009

Introduced by Sen. VOLKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, amended on second report, ordered to a third reading, and to be reprinted as amended, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend chapter 137 of the laws of 1817 relating to slaves and servants, in relation to acknowledging the tragedy of slavery in New York state

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Chapter 137 of the laws of 1817 relating to slaves and
2 servants is amended by adding a new section XXXII-a to read as follows:
3 S XXXII-A. ACKNOWLEDGES THAT SLAVERY, THE TRANSATLANTIC AND THE
4 DOMESTIC SLAVE TRADE WERE APPALLING TRAGEDIES IN THE HISTORY OF NEW YORK
5 STATE NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THEIR ABHORRENT BARBARISM BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF
6 THEIR MAGNITUDE, ORGANIZED NATURE AND ESPECIALLY THEIR NEGATION OF THE
7 HUMANITY OF THE ENSLAVED PERSON. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
8 FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE INSTITUTIONS OF SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE
9 TRADE IN ENSLAVED PERSONS ARE NOW AND SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE BEEN CRIMES
10 AGAINST THIS STATE AS WELL AS CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY. THE GOVERNMENT
11 OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGES THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERN-
12 MENT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FEDERALIST
13 PARTY BEGAN IN 1799 TO LEGISLATE THE GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVES, WHICH
14 FINALLY OCCURRED ON JULY 4, 1827, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF NEW
15 YORK ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IN 1785 THE LEGISLATURE NARROWLY DEFEATED A
16 BILL THAT WOULD HAVE PROVIDED FOR GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE
17 STATE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK NEVER SERIOUSLY
18 PROPOSED THE IMMEDIATE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE STATE. THE GOVERNMENT
19 OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGES THAT A PROVISION IN THIS
20 CHAPTER OF THE LAWS OF NEW YORK ALLOWED TRANSIENTS TO BRING SLAVES INTO

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 NEW YORK FOR A NINE MONTH PERIOD, AND PART-TIME RESIDENTS TO BRING
2 SLAVES INTO THE STATE TEMPORARILY AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF NEW
3 YORK ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1841 THAT THESE PRO-SLAVERY
4 PROVISIONS OF OUR LAWS WERE ELIMINATED. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF
5 NEW YORK FORMALLY APOLOGIZES FOR ITS ROLE IN SANCTIONING, EXPLOITING AND
6 PERPETUATING SLAVERY AND ITS VESTIGES, INCLUDING THE ENACTMENT OF SLAVE
7 CODES THAT CREATED THE EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF CHILDREN, AND THE
8 DISSOLUTION OF THEIR FAMILIES AS PERSONIFIED BY THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
9 SOJOURNER TRUTH.
10 S 2. This act shall take effect immediately.