



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1000-2016, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1000

Resolution recognizing March 5th as “Three-Fifths Clause Awareness Day” to be officially observed each year in New York City.

By Council Members King, Chin, Barron, Cornegy, Gibson, Mendez, Torres, Rose, Cabrera, Mealy, Ferreras-Copeland, Dromm, Eugene, Cohen and Ulrich

Whereas, The Three-Fifths Clause enacted in the United States Constitution in 1787 declared that enslaved persons, the majority of whom were African-Americans, would be counted as three-fifths of a person in calculating each state’s total population; and

Whereas, The clause was enacted as a compromise in the debate over whether and how enslaved persons would be counted when determining a state’s total population for legislative and taxing purposes; and

Whereas, The Three-Fifths Clause provided that representation in Congress would be based on the “whole Number of free Persons” and “three-fifths of all other persons” meaning those who were enslaved were not considered whole persons; and

Whereas, Due to this clause and the fact that representation within the federal legislature is based on a state’s total population, southern states were granted significantly more seats in Congress and the Electoral College; and

Whereas, The enactment of the Three-Fifths Clause allowed the interests of slaveholders to largely dominate the United States government, considering that African-Americans were denied the right to vote and were treated as property; and

Whereas, Although southern states largely benefitted from this clause, northern states such as New York, where slavery was not abolished until 1827, did as well; and

Whereas, In addition to the precise impacts the Three-Fifths Clause had on representation, it also set a precedent for the perpetual unequal treatment of African-Americans in the United States that would go on for centuries and is still felt today; and

Whereas, Through the Emancipation of Slavery, the Reconstruction Era, repealing of Jim Crow Laws, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's, African-Americans have not only fought for equal rights, but the acknowledgement of their full humanity; and

Whereas, Bringing awareness to the Three-Fifths Clause is of importance to understanding the current day plight of African-Americans in New York City and the nation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes March 5th as “Three-Fifths Clause Awareness Day” to be officially observed each year in New York City.

LS#6687
02.25.16
CA