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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 87

Offered January 23, 2026

*Designating April 13, in 2026 and in each succeeding year, as a Day of Remembrance for Victims of Lynching in Virginia.*

Patron—McQuinn

**Referred to Committee on Rules**

9        WHEREAS, throughout America's history of slavery, segregation, and inequality, thousands of Black  
10      Americans were lynched across America, particularly throughout the southern United States, to perpetuate  
11      racial inequality and white supremacy and to terrorize Black communities; and

12        WHEREAS, during Reconstruction, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United  
13        States Constitution were ratified, abolishing slavery, granting citizenship to any person born or naturalized in  
14        the United States, and guaranteeing the rights to due process of law and equal protection under the law and  
15        the right to vote for Black men; and

15 the rights of Black men, and  
16 WHEREAS, in outright defiance of the Reconstruction Amendments, people across the nation acted  
17 outside of the law, deliberately, violently, and brutally, against Black citizens in retribution for alleged or  
18 invented crimes and faced few or no consequences; and

19 WHEREAS, the Equal Justice Initiative has documented more than 4,000 lynchings that took place  
20 throughout the South between 1877 and 1950, over 80 of which took place in Virginia; other scholarship  
21 documents more than 100 lynchings in Virginia; and

22 WHEREAS, Black men, women, and children lived in fear that their lives and the lives of loved ones  
23 could end violently at any time and in any place; and

24 WHEREAS, lynchings were often widely known and publicly attended; some were witnessed by crowds  
25 that numbered in the thousands, reflecting community acceptance, and many leaders and authorities and  
26 much of society denied and enabled the illegal and horrific nature of the acts; and

27        WHEREAS, *Richmond Planet* editor John Mitchell, Jr., exposed lynchings in Virginia as they occurred  
28 and led the state's anti-lynching campaign; however, despite his efforts and other accounts, historians believe  
29 still more lynchings remain undocumented; and

30 WHEREAS, at the urging of Norfolk Virginia-Pilot editor Louis Isaac Jaffe and other anti-lynching  
31 activists, and to curtail mob violence in Virginia, the General Assembly passed an anti-lynching measure that  
32 was signed into law on March 14, 1928, declaring lynching a state crime; and

33 WHEREAS, the extreme racial animus, violence, and terror embodied in the act of lynching did not die  
34 with the criminalization of the act, and few, if any, prosecutions occurred under the measure; and

35 WHEREAS, the legacy of racism that outlived slavery, enabled the rise and acceptance of lynching,  
36 facilitated segregation and disenfranchisement, and denied education and civil rights to Black citizens has yet  
37 to be uprooted in the Commonwealth, the South, and the nation, and this dark and shameful chapter of  
38 American history must be understood, acknowledged, and fully documented and the seemingly irreparable  
39 breach mended; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the General Assembly unanimously passed House Joint Resolution No. 655 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 297, acknowledging with profound regret the existence and acceptance of lynching within the Commonwealth, making Virginia the first state in the nation to formally acknowledge this painful chapter of history; and

43 this painful chapter of history, and  
44 WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 655 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 297 charged the Virginia  
45 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission with the task of bringing awareness and recognition of  
46 this history to communities across the state, that such awareness might contribute to the process of healing  
47 and reconciliation in Virginia's still-wounded communities and for families and descendants affected by  
48 lynchings; now, therefore, be it

49       RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate  
50       April 13, in 2026 and in each succeeding year, as a Day of Remembrance for Victims of Lynching in  
51       Virginia; and, be it

52       RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to  
53 the Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, requesting that it further disseminate copies  
54 of this resolution to its constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of  
55 Virginia in this matter; and, be it