

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 5—  
Assemblymen Frierson and Wheeler

Joint Sponsors: Senators Atkinson and Settlemeyer

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution by the Nevada Legislature, the first state in the nation to do so.

WHEREAS, In 1868, when Ulysses S. Grant was elected President of the United States, the country struggled as a nation torn apart by war; and

WHEREAS, Suffrage for black men was allowed in only some parts of the country; and

WHEREAS, To address the problem, an amendment to the United States Constitution was proposed to guarantee suffrage to all black men in all states; and

WHEREAS, William M. Stewart, U.S. Senator from the State of Nevada, prepared the text of the final version of the proposal to declare that “[t]he right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude”; and

WHEREAS, Senator Stewart passionately argued that the amendment to the Constitution was necessary to guarantee that each man has the right to protect his own liberty; and

WHEREAS, On February 25, 1869, the U.S. House of Representatives and on February 26, 1869, the U.S. Senate approved the language proposed by Senator Stewart to be added as the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution upon ratification of the states; and

WHEREAS, Although the Nevada Legislature was required to adjourn by March 4, 1869, Senator Stewart swiftly arranged to send the proposal for ratification in hopes of having his State of Nevada be the first to ratify the measure; and

WHEREAS, Both houses of the Nevada Legislature, during this 4th Legislative Session, approved a joint resolution to ratify the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on March 1, 1869; and

WHEREAS, By the end of the week, six other states had ratified the 15th Amendment and five more had done so by the end of the month; and



WHEREAS, By February 3, 1870, the final necessary ratification was obtained and on March 30, 1870, the 15th Amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Although the struggle was not over and some states found ways to continue to exclude the vote of African American men, Nevada has the historic honor of having had its U.S. Senator pen the language of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and becoming the first state in the nation to acknowledge the right of suffrage to African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Nevada continues to pride itself on diversity and inclusion in all aspects of life and government; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the members of the 80th Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby commemorate the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on March 1, 1869, by the members of the 4th Session of the Nevada Legislature, the first state legislature in the nation to do so; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.

