

MAR 12 2003

COMMERCE, REGULATION & LABOR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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BY FORD and B. HANSEN

Passed House, Date \_\_\_\_\_ Passed Senate, Date \_\_\_\_\_

Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Joint Resolution directing the commissioner of insurance to  
2 solicit slaveholder insurance policy records from the archives  
3 of Iowa-licensed insurance companies.

4 WHEREAS, it is estimated that eight million men and women were  
5 enslaved in what is now the United States of America during the  
6 period from 1619 to 1865, and as many as thirty-five million  
7 American citizens are descended from those former slaves; and

8 WHEREAS, in other jurisdictions where insurance companies have  
9 searched their archives and those of predecessor firms, insurance  
10 policy records from the slavery era have been discovered  
11 documenting insurance coverage issued to slaveholders for damage  
12 to or death of a slave; and

13 WHEREAS, the insurance documents often contain information of  
14 historical and genealogical interest to historians and  
15 descendants of slaves, including the names of insured  
16 slaveholders and the names of slaves covered in the insurance  
17 policies; and

18 WHEREAS, details contained in these insurance documents  
19 regarding insurance premiums and terms and conditions of coverage  
20 provide a unique historical insight into the economics of the  
21 former slave economy; and

22 WHEREAS, while most insurers currently doing business in Iowa  
23 were incorporated after the end of the slavery era, there may be  
24 some insurance companies whose archives contain useful

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1 information about slaveholder insurance policies issued by a  
2 predecessor corporation; NOW THEREFORE,  
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. The commissioner of insurance is directed to  
2 seek information from the archives of insurance companies  
3 licensed to do business in this state, including subsidiaries  
4 of international insurance corporations, regarding records of  
5 any insurance policies issued by an insurance company or a  
6 predecessor company during the slavery era providing coverage  
7 to a slaveholder for damage to or death of a slave, including  
8 the names of any such slaves and slaveholders contained in  
9 those records.

10 Sec. 2. It is the intent of the general assembly to rely  
11 on the voluntary cooperation and good example of insurers  
12 licensed to do business in this state; therefore, the  
13 commissioner of insurance shall seek the slaveholder insurance  
14 policy information from such insurers by request. The  
15 commissioner of insurance shall report the commissioner's  
16 findings to the general assembly by December 1, 2004.

17 EXPLANATION

18 This joint resolution directs the commissioner of insurance  
19 to seek information from insurance companies licensed to do  
20 business in this state regarding slaveholder insurance  
21 policies issued by an insurance company or a predecessor  
22 company during the slavery era. Records of slaveholder  
23 insurance policies, which may contain names of slaveholders  
24 and slaves as well as details of insurance premiums, terms,  
25 and conditions, are of interest to historians and descendants  
26 of former slaves. The commissioner is to request that  
27 insurance companies perform the records search voluntarily.  
28 The commissioner is required to report the findings of this  
29 search to the general assembly by December 1, 2004.

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