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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 29

BY FORD and HANSEN

A Resolution urging the Commissioner of Insurance to solicit slaveholder insurance policy records from the archives of Iowa-licensed insurance companies.

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 8 million men and women were enslaved in what is now the United States of America during the period from 1619 to 1865, and as many as 35 million American citizens are descended from those former slaves; and

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

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

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

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

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1 slaveholder insurance policies issued by a predecessor
2 corporation; NOW THEREFORE,

3 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
4 That the House of Representatives urges the
5 Commissioner of Insurance to seek information from the
6 archives of insurance companies licensed to do
7 business in this state, including subsidiaries of
8 international insurance corporations, regarding
9 records of any insurance policies issued by an
10 insurance company or a predecessor company during the
11 slavery era providing coverage to a slaveholder for
12 damage to or death of a slave, including the names of
13 any such slaves and slaveholders contained in those
14 records; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That it is the intent of
16 the House of Representatives to rely on the voluntary
17 cooperation and good example of insurers licensed to
18 do business in this state; therefore, the Commissioner
19 of Insurance is asked to seek the slaveholder
20 insurance policy information from such insurers by
21 request; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of
23 Insurance is requested to report the Commissioner's
24 findings to the General Assembly by December 1, 2004;
25 and

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the
27 House of Representatives shall forward a copy of this
28 resolution to the Commissioner of Insurance.

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