

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

*No. 84*

Approved March 8, 2016

WHEREAS, Enslaved Africans were brought to Rhode Island as early as 1652; and

WHEREAS, By 1750, Providence, Newport, and Bristol had become major human trade markets in the American colonies; and

WHEREAS, In 1755, captive Africans accounted for more than 11% of Rhode Island's population; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island was among the most active Northern colonies in the trade of captive Africans, and according to an article in the Jamestown Press, from 1720 to 1807, the trading of enslaved people was the "number one financial activity" for Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, According to the New York Times, between 1725 and 1807, more than 1,000 slaving voyages, about 58% of the total from the United States, left from Providence, Newport, Warren, or Bristol; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's large textile industry produced roughly 50% of the clothing worn by enslaved people in the American South; and

WHEREAS, The Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (MPCPMP) is a non-profit initiative established in 2011 to honor the two million captive Africans who perished during the transatlantic crossing known as the Middle Passage and the ten million who survived only to be forced into lives of slavery; and

WHEREAS, The MPCPMP seeks to identify all ports of entry for Africans during the 350 years of the transatlantic trade in captive Africans and supports the installation of historic markers to establish a permanent record honoring those who died and those who survived the Middle Passage; and

WHEREAS, MPCPMP ceremonies have been held in many communities along the eastern seaboard, including Annapolis, Baltimore, Boston, and Philadelphia, and markers are already in place in Jamestown, St. Augustine, Sotterley Plantation, Fredericksburg, and Yorktown; and

WHEREAS, A Rhode Island-based Middle Passage Project committee has already been formed and has begun efforts to commemorate the lives of the victims of the trade in captive Africans and to ensure that Rhode Island's role in that trade is not forgotten; and

WHEREAS, While no monument or ceremony can ever atone for the horrors of slavery and the trade of captive Africans, as the elected representatives of the people of Providence, the Providence City Council has a moral obligation to acknowledge our city's role in that trade and educate future generations about that period of our history.

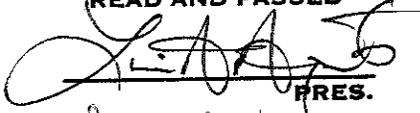
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council does hereby support the Rhode Island Middle Passage Project, and its goal of installing an historic marker in Providence (1) acknowledging the city as a port receiving enslaved people and (2) commemorating the lives of those who suffered and perished as a result of the international trade in captive Africans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Chief Operating Officer, the Superintendent of the Parks Department, and the members of the Board of Parks Commissioners.

**IN CITY COUNCIL**

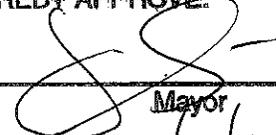
MAR 03 2016

**READ AND PASSED**

  
PRES.

  
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE

  
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Mayor

Date: 3/8/16