

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 201

Approved June 26, 2020

WHEREAS, In 2009 the Rhode Island General Assembly approved a ballot referendum to allow the voters to decide on shortening the official state name to “The State of Rhode Island” by removing “and Providence Plantations”; and

WHEREAS, While the referendum was ultimately rejected by the voters in 2009, the underlying reasons for the referendum still exist and have only grown more pressing in the intervening years; and

WHEREAS, Since 2009, America has had to grapple with the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor and most recently George Floyd, all of which refocused the discussions surrounding race, inequality, and justice in this country; and

WHEREAS, The reference to the Providence Plantations in our state name, while not a direct refence to slavery, serves as a distinct reminder of the early years of the State in which slavery played in pivotal role in forming the foundation of Rhode Island’s economy; and

WHEREAS, Across the country Cities and States are recognizing that confederate statues and memorials must be removed, not to erase the country’s history but to acknowledge that as a society we do not need to continue celebrating individuals and institutions that were so directly linked to the horrors of the slave trade; and

WHEREAS, While it would not be appropriate to ignore the significant role that slavery played in the formative years of the state, it is also entirely unnecessary and in many ways offensive to continue to identify that era in our history in such a glaring manner as in the official name of the State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council requests the General Assembly revisit the issues surrounding the official name of the state and allow a new referendum for Rhode Island voters to decide whether the use of “Providence Plantations” is still appropriate in today’s society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the members of the Providence Delegation, as well as the Speaker of the House and the Senate President.

IN CITY COUNCIL

JUN 18 2020

READ AND PASSED

Sabrina Mats
PRES.

Man Selbach
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

[Signature]

Mayor
Date: *6/26/20*