

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION DRSJR85369-LG-619 (7/28)

Sponsors: Senator Dorsett.

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE FINDINGS OF THE 1898
2 WILMINGTON RACE RIOT COMMISSION.

3 Whereas, public knowledge and historical memory of the 1898 Wilmington
4 Race Riot was obscure until the North Carolina General Assembly, led by
5 Representative Thomas E. Wright and the late Senator Luther Jordan, established the
6 Wilmington Race Riot Commission ("Commission") in 2000 to develop a historical
7 record of the event and to assess the economic impact of the riot on African-Americans
8 in Wilmington and across the Eastern region and the State; and

9 Whereas, the Commission, chaired by Representative Wright and Senator
10 Julia Boseman, both of Wilmington, oversaw a formal investigation of the events of
11 1898 and approved a 464-page report, detailing the history of the riot and the events that
12 precipitated it; and

13 Whereas, the Commission's report concluded that political leaders and others
14 were directly responsible for and participants in the violence of November 17, 1898,
15 engineering and executing a statewide campaign to win the 1900 elections that was
16 vicious, polarizing, and defamatory toward African-Americans and that encouraged
17 violence; and

18 Whereas, the effects of that campaign and the Wilmington Riots lasted far
19 beyond 1898, paving the way for legislation that disenfranchised African-American and
20 poor white citizens, for lynching and violence against African-American citizens, and
21 for Jim Crow segregation until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s; and

22 Whereas, the State of North Carolina embraces the Commission's report as a
23 chronicle of an important part of State history, but it is saddened by the full extent of
24 leaders' involvement in the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot as these deplorable actions
25 contradict the spirit of a modern State; Now, therefore,

26 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

27 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly of North Carolina acknowledges the
28 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission's findings and expresses profound regret that

1 violence, intimidation, and force were used to replace a duly elected local government,
2 that people lost their livelihoods and were forced to leave their homes, and that the
3 government was unsuccessful in protecting its citizens during that time.

4 **SECTION 2.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.