

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 8

INTRODUCED BY C. HINKLE, S. KELLY, T. MILLETT, P. FIELDER, J. GILLETTE, B. MITCHELL

A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA RECOGNIZING
THE HISTORY OF RACISM AND BIGOTRY WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

WHEREAS, this resolution is meant to be a reflection and a history lesson and is not directed toward
any individual serving in the 69th Montana Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the Democratic Party was founded in 1828 under the main principle of upholding
institutional race-based slavery; and

WHEREAS, under President Andrew Jackson, a foundational figure in the Democratic Party, the Indian
Removal Act of 1830 was signed into law, leading to the forced relocation of Native American tribes in what
became known as the Trail of Tears, which resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of entire
Native American communities; and

WHEREAS, during the antebellum period, the Democratic Party was a staunch defender of slavery,
with its platforms in the 1840s and 1850s explicitly supporting the rights of slaveholders and opposing federal
interference with the institution of slavery in the Southern states; and

WHEREAS, the Democratic Party's support for the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which allowed
territories to decide the legality of slavery through popular sovereignty, deepened national divisions and
contributed to the violence known as "Bleeding Kansas"; and

WHEREAS, in 1861, Southern states dominated by Democratic leaders seceded from the United
States to form the Confederate States of America, initiating the Civil War in defense of slavery against the
Union led by Republican President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, the Confederate Constitution, drafted by Democratic leaders of the seceded states,
explicitly enshrined slavery as a permanent institution, declaring that no law could deny "the right of property in
negro slaves" and mandating its protection in all Confederate territories; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth, a Democrat and Confederate sympathizer,
assassinated President Abraham Lincoln, a gutless act fueled by his seething hatred for Lincoln's emancipation

1 of the slaves and the Union's victory over the Democrat-run Confederacy, proving that the party's bloodlust for
2 slavery ran so deep they would rather murder a president than lose their precious chains; and

3 WHEREAS, following the Civil War, the Democratic Party in the South became a primary vehicle for the
4 establishment of Jim Crow laws, segregation, and the disenfranchisement of African Americans and Native
5 Americans through poll taxes, literacy tests, and other discriminatory measures during the late 19th and early
6 20th centuries; and

7 WHEREAS, minstrel shows, emerging in the early 19th century in America, were a racist form of
8 entertainment in which white performers donned blackface to caricature Black people as lazy, ignorant, and
9 buffoonish stereotypes; and

10 WHEREAS, popularized by figures like Thomas "Daddy" Rice with his "Jim Crow" character in the
11 1830s, these performances mocked enslaved and free African Americans, reinforcing and justifying slavery;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, after the Civil War, minstrel shows evolved but persisted into the 20th century, with even
14 some Black performers coerced into blackface to earn a living, perpetuating the degrading imagery, and this
15 cultural phenomenon not only shaped negative perceptions of Black identity but also embedded racial mockery
16 into American theater, film, and beyond, leaving a legacy of harm and shaping modern Democrat-controlled
17 Hollywood into what we see today; and

18 WHEREAS, the Democratic Party provided political cover and support for the Ku Klux Klan, a white
19 supremacist organization founded in 1865, which carried out lynchings, intimidation, and violence against
20 African Americans, with many Southern Democratic officials either participating in or refusing to prosecute
21 these acts during Reconstruction and beyond; and

22 WHEREAS, between 1882 and 1968, thousands of African Americans were strung up, butchered, and
23 burned in savage lynchings, mostly in Democratic machine-run states, where their gutless leaders either
24 cheered the bloodshed or shrugged it off like cowards, letting these extrajudicial slaughters run wild as a sick
25 tool to keep Black folks under their boot and preserve their precious racial tyranny; and

26 WHEREAS, prominent Democratic leaders, such as Senator James K. Vardaman of Mississippi and
27 Governor Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina, openly advocated for white supremacy, endorsed Ku Klux Klan
28 activities, and used their positions within the party to perpetuate racial violence and oppression during the early

20th century, and the Democratic National Convention of 1924 saw significant influence from the Ku Klux Klan, including parades of Klansmen throughout New York City; and

WHEREAS, Democratic President Grover Cleveland, during his terms in the 1880s and 1890s, aggressively supported forced assimilation policies, including the expansion of Native American boarding schools designed to "kill the Indian, save the man", which stripped Indian children of their languages, traditions, and identities under the guise of Democratic-led progress; and

WHEREAS, sundown towns, which were vile, racist enclaves where Black folks, Native Americans, and anyone else deemed "undesirable" were driven out or murdered if they dared linger past dusk, flourished under the watchful eye of Democratic Party machines; and

WHEREAS, sundown towns existed not only in the South and Midwest, but in Montana as well, and here in Helena, Montana, the Black population plummeted from 420 in 1910 to a measly 45 by 1970, driven out after a Democratic prosecutor in 1906 ranted to a jury that "respectable white people" needed to "rise in their might" against Blacks, which was a call to arms cheered by the liberal fake news of the time as "eloquent" and showed how Democrats fanned the flames of sundown town policies; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the Democratic Party's openly racist rhetoric, human zoos or "ethnological exhibitions" were incorporated, prevalent from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, that were a disturbing manifestation of racism in which individuals from colonized or indigenous groups, often Africans, Native Americans, and Filipinos, were exhibited in degrading spectacles for audiences; and

WHEREAS, these displays, such as at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, where over 1,000 Filipinos were showcased in a mock "village", portrayed Filipinos as primitive or subhuman, reinforcing pseudoscientific theories of racial hierarchy that were popular at the time, and promoters capitalized on this curiosity, exhibiting figures like the Congolese man Ota Benga, who was caged at the Bronx Zoo in 1906 alongside apes, drawing thousands of gawking spectators; and

WHEREAS, rooted in the era's imperialist and Social Darwinist ideologies, these exhibitions dehumanized their subjects, justified slavery, and perpetuated stereotypes that lingered in American culture long after the practice waned, all while Democrat bigwigs smoking fine tobacco nodded along, salivating over slavery's "justification", Darwin's questionable "theories", and embedding their filthy stereotypes into America's bones long after the cages rusted; and

1 WHEREAS, President Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat who took office in 1913, resegregated federal
2 offices, praised the film "The Birth of a Nation" for its portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan, and expressed views
3 supporting white supremacy, reinforcing racial hierarchies during his administration; and

4 WHEREAS, Margaret Sanger, a prominent figure associated with the Democratic Party's progressive
5 wing and the founder of Planned Parenthood, advocated for birth control in the early 20th century but also
6 endorsed eugenics, including statements and initiatives that targeted minority and impoverished communities
7 for population control, reflecting racist undertones in her work; and

8 WHEREAS, Sanger's "Negro Project" in the 1930s, aimed at reducing birth rates among African
9 Americans, was framed as a public health effort but relied on assumptions of racial inferiority and has been
10 criticized for its alignment with eugenicist goals; and

11 WHEREAS, during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat, authorized the
12 internment of over 120,000 Japanese Americans, including at Fort Missoula, many of whom were U.S. citizens,
13 in a policy driven by racial prejudice and wartime hysteria; and

14 WHEREAS, following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, widespread fear and suspicion targeted
15 Japanese Americans, despite a lack of evidence linking them to espionage or sabotage; and

16 WHEREAS, President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, signed in 1942, enabled the forced relocation
17 of these individuals to isolated camps, stripping them of their rights, property, and dignity; and

18 WHEREAS, this decision was fueled by long-standing anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast, where
19 economic competition and racial stereotypes had already fostered hostility toward Japanese immigrants and
20 their descendants; and

21 WHEREAS, during the Battle of Athens in 1946, a rebellion against corrupt local Democratic officials in
22 McMinn County, Tennessee, who were engaging in election fraud, a sheriff's deputy under the Democratic
23 machine shot African American voter Tom Gillespie in the back as he fled after being beaten with brass
24 knuckles for attempting to cast his ballot, highlighting the party's role in violent voter suppression; and

25 WHEREAS, during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, peaceful African American
26 protesters advocating for equality were beaten by police and sprayed with fire hoses in cities like Birmingham,
27 Alabama, which were under the control of Democratic officials, such as Governor George Wallace and Public
28 Safety Commissioner Bull Connor, who fiercely opposed desegregation; and

1 WHEREAS, the Democratic National Convention of 1968 in Chicago highlighted the party's internal
2 conflicts over race and justice as protests against the Vietnam War and demands for civil rights were met with
3 violent police responses ordered by Mayor Richard J. Daley, a prominent Democrat; and

4 WHEREAS, the 1968 convention's chaos, including the suppression of African American delegates and
5 activists advocating for racial equality, underscored the Democratic Party's struggle to fully embrace civil rights
6 amid broader societal upheaval; and

7 WHEREAS, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, by
8 James Earl Ray, a white supremacist, who was bred in the muck of Democratic strongholds, whose actions
9 were rooted in the deep-seated racism that King fought against; and

10 WHEREAS, King's murder was a brutal manifestation of the systemic racial hatred he sought to
11 dismantle through nonviolent activism, targeting Black equality and justice; and

12 WHEREAS, in 1987, then-Governor Bill Clinton signed Act 116 into law, reaffirming the design and
13 symbolism of the Arkansas state flag, which included a provision dedicating one of its four blue stars to
14 commemorate the Confederate States of America; and

15 WHEREAS, Clinton's approval of the act, which explicitly stated that "the blue star above the word
16 'ARKANSAS' is to commemorate the Confederate States of America", remains a notable moment in Clinton's
17 political career; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1992, during his presidential campaign, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton returned to his
19 state to oversee the execution of Ricky Ray Rector, a mentally impaired African American man convicted of
20 murder; and

21 WHEREAS, Rector, who had lobotomized himself with a self-inflicted gunshot, showed severe
22 cognitive deficits, yet Clinton denied clemency, allowing the lethal injection to proceed, and this decision was
23 widely seen as a calculated move to bolster Clinton's "tough on crime" image, distancing himself from
24 perceptions of Democratic softness on crime; and

25 WHEREAS, Clinton later emphasized this stance, reportedly saying, "I can be nicked on a lot, but no
26 one can say I'm soft on crime", using Rector's execution to solidify his hardline credentials, all while Clinton
27 crooned sax tunes to woo Black voters; and

28 WHEREAS, in recent years, the Democratic Party has aligned itself with the Black Lives Matter

1 movement, which emerged in 2013 and gained prominence after 2020, advocating for racial justice while
2 opposing the phrase "All Lives Matter" as a dismissal of systemic racism, a stance that has drawn criticism for
3 prioritizing certain racial narratives over others; and

4 WHEREAS, as San Francisco District Attorney from 2004 to 2010, Democrat Kamala Harris
5 prosecuted roughly 1,900 marijuana cases, with African Americans disproportionately impacted, fueling
6 accusations of bigotry; and

7 WHEREAS, Harris' aggressive enforcement perpetuated racial biases in the justice system, unfairly
8 targeting Black communities for low-level offenses while bolstering her "tough on crime" image, and though she
9 later claimed to support leniency and marijuana legalization, even bragging about smoking marijuana herself
10 when it was illegal, earlier actions suggest a willingness to prioritize career advancement over addressing
11 systemic inequities, a theme among Democrats, which contributed to the incarceration of many African
12 Americans in a racially skewed legal landscape; and

13 WHEREAS, while serving as Minnesota Governor in 2020, Democrat Tim Walz's sluggish response to
14 the riots following George Floyd's death allowed Black neighborhoods in Minneapolis to burn, with businesses
15 and homes destroyed amid chaos fueled by groups like Antifa and Black Lives Matter, and Walz deliberately
16 dragged his feet on deploying the National Guard, prioritizing his image among far-left voters and proving he
17 would rather sacrifice Black property for a photo-op faster than a Klansman lighting a cross; and

18 WHEREAS, Planned Parenthood clinics even today are disproportionately located in or near Black
19 communities, with studies showing about 60% of their facilities are within 2 miles of neighborhoods where Black
20 residents make up a significant portion of the population, keeping true to founder Margeret Sanger's vision of
21 eugenics; and

22 WHEREAS, as of 2025, the Democratic Party's diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in government,
23 education, and corporate sectors are seen as discriminatory policies favoring specific racial and identity groups
24 over merit-based systems; and

25 WHEREAS, in recent elections, the Montana Democratic Party has frequently attacked its Republican
26 opponents with the slur "carpetbagger", a Jim Crow-era term for Northern Republican abolitionists who bought
27 up Southern land after the Civil War, which is a cheap shot that reeks of the Democratic Party's old plantation
28 grudge; and

1 WHEREAS, acknowledging this complex history, from its origins to present-day controversies, is
2 essential to understanding the evolution of political institutions and their impact on racial justice in the United
3 States.

4
5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
6 MONTANA:

7 (1) That the Democratic Party's historical and ongoing entanglement with racism and bigotry, from
8 the Trail of Tears to its defense of slavery in the Confederate Constitution, the rebellion of Southern Democratic
9 states, the assassination of Lincoln by Democrat John Wilkes Booth, Jim Crow laws, minstrel shows, human
10 zoos, support for the Ku Klux Klan and lynchings, segregation, eugenics, discriminatory policies under leaders
11 like President Wilson and Margaret Sanger, eugenics, Japanese-American internment camps, the shooting of
12 Tom Gillespie during the Battle of Athens, the beating and hosing of African American protesters during the
13 Civil Rights Movement, the racial tensions of the 1968 convention, Bill Clinton, the Montana Democratic Party's
14 inability to let the slur "carpetbagger" go, and contemporary debates over Black Lives Matter and diversity,
15 equity, and inclusion policies, be recognized as a critical part of its legacy.

16 (2) That this acknowledgment serves as a call for continued reflection, education, and commitment
17 to addressing the enduring effects of racism and the challenges of racial policy in American society.

18 (3) That the Montana House of Representatives urges the Montana Democratic Party and the
19 Democratic National Committee to issue a formal, public apology for its historic role in defending slavery,
20 opposing civil rights, promoting eugenics, and enforcing racial segregation.

21 (4) That reparations and restitution for the harms caused by Democratic-led policies, from slavery
22 to segregation and internment, should be considered by the Democratic Party itself, not by the American
23 taxpayer.

24 (5) That members of the Montana Democratic Caucus be invited to join in affirming this resolution
25 as a step toward honest reckoning and bipartisan healing.

26 (6) That the Montana House of Representatives will pursue legislation to ban the use of diversity,
27 equity, and inclusion frameworks, critical race theory, and environmental, social, and governance scoring in all
28 state institutions, as these programs are ideological descendants of race-based discrimination promoted

1 historically by the Democratic Party.

2 (7) That the Montana House of Representatives affirms that no political party, no matter how
3 rebranded, can escape the consequences of its legacy, and that silence in the face of this truth is complicity.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Minority Leader of the Montana House of Representatives send
5 a copy of this resolution to:

6 (1) the Montana Democratic Party Headquarters;

7 (2) the Democratic National Committee;

8 (3) Planned Parenthood Federation of America;

9 (4) the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People;

10 (5) the American Civil Liberties Union;

11 (6) Forward Montana;

12 (7) the Human Rights Campaign;

13 (8) each member of the Montana Congressional Delegation;

14 (9) the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of
15 the United States Senate; and

16 (10) the President of the United States.

17 - END -