



# Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Resolution

## *Urging Removal of Slavery from Section 25 of Kentucky Constitution*


*To All Whom These Presents Shall Come:*

- WHEREAS,** The United States of America outlawed slavery upon passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1865; and
- WHEREAS,** Kentucky refused to ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment until March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1976; and
- WHEREAS,** In an effort to prolong the vestiges of slavery, Kentucky alongside many southern states adopted so called “punishment clauses” retaining the option of slavery in circumstances in which a person has been duly convicted; and
- WHEREAS,** The punishment clauses were used to create a system of prison labor, along with the passage of “Black Codes” which criminalized common behaviors often attributed to Black Americans; and
- WHEREAS,** All forms of slavery are repugnant, regardless of any circumstances, including as punishment for crime; and
- WHEREAS,** There should be no place for any provision in our State Constitution which permits slavery, even if limited to punishment for crime; and
- WHEREAS,** The Commission has previously adopted a resolution asking for the removal of Section 25 of the Kentucky Constitution in 2015; and
- WHEREAS,** Given the Commission’s essential function, duty, and responsibility to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all the citizens of the Commonwealth:
- NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** Slavery, as referenced in Section 25 of the Kentucky Constitution, should be unconditionally prohibited.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,**

That a copy of this Resolution be presented to the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission for distribution to each member of the Kentucky General Assembly and to the Governor of Kentucky and incorporated into the minutes of the next regularly convened Commission Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky on February 16, 2023.

On Behalf of the Commission:

  
Raymond M. Burse  
Commission Chair

Attest:

  
Terrance A. Sullivan  
Executive Director