

SENATE RESOLUTION

8699

By Senator Braun

1 WHEREAS, Washington state recognizes important contributions made
2 to the development of the state by early settlers and pioneers; and

3 WHEREAS, The people of Centralia and this state are celebrating
4 the 200th birthday of the African-American pioneer George Washington;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The young George Washington and his adoptive parents,
7 Anna and James Cochran, repeatedly struggled against racial
8 discrimination in the east, and made the dangerous trek across the
9 Oregon Trail to settle in what was then the Oregon Territory; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Washington settled along the Chehalis River in 1852,
11 running a pole ferry across the Chehalis River and hosting travelers
12 along the major road through the new territory; and

13 WHEREAS, He and his wife, Mary Jane, founded the town now known
14 as Centralia in 1875, donated to churches, gave his city a public
15 square, and fostered not just a town but a community; and

16 WHEREAS, He was a man of great Christian faith and provided aid
17 to fellow settlers who had fallen onto hard times, which fostered his
18 reputation as a caring neighbor, an astute businessman, a savvy
19 farmer, and a man of generosity; and

20 WHEREAS, Mr. Washington further developed his area of residence
21 by providing affordable building lots at fair prices to incoming
22 settlers; and

1 WHEREAS, When Centralia struggled economically during the Panic
2 of 1893, Mr. Washington used his personal wealth to support his
3 friends and neighbors with a generous and open heart, in keeping with
4 his personal motto of "peace and plenty"; and

5 WHEREAS, He has no living descendants, but the aid and mentorship
6 he provided to his community made him a father in spirit to all
7 residents of Centralia; and

8 WHEREAS, His compassion, generosity, and steadfast nature shaped
9 the town of Centralia throughout his life and even after his death;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The people of Centralia are honoring their pioneer
12 founder in his bicentennial year with activities, celebrations, and
13 the dedication on August 11, 2018, of a new bronze statue in his
14 honor;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate
16 honors George Washington in his bicentennial year as an important
17 figure in Northwest history; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Senate acknowledge the legacy of
19 Mr. Washington, whose efforts have created a culture of
20 neighborliness in his community; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
22 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the City
23 Council of Centralia and the Lewis County Board of County
24 Commissioners.

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