

# LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS (LJE)

Resolution LJE-23-08

## REMOVING SLAVERY FROM STATE CONSTITUTIONS

WHEREAS, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States abolished slavery in the United States of America, effective December 18, 1865;

WHEREAS, the One Hundred Eleventh and One Hundred Twelfth General Assemblies adopted resolutions to amend Article 1, Section 33 of the Constitution of Tennessee for the purpose of submitting a proposed constitutional amendment to the voters of Tennessee that the voters approved in November of 2022, which amendment would clarify that slavery is prohibited in Tennessee as to all persons, including those who have been convicted of criminal offenses;

WHEREAS, Colorado, Nebraska and Utah passed similar measures in earlier elections, while voters also approved measures in 2022 in Alabama, Vermont, and Oregon;

WHEREAS, in Louisiana voters rejected a ballot question known as Amendment 7 that asked whether they supported a constitutional amendment to prohibit the use of involuntary servitude in the criminal justice system;

WHEREAS, other state constitutions contain provisions that could reasonably be interpreted to permit slavery under some circumstances or otherwise condone slavery, particularly in regards for punishment of crime; and

WHEREAS, the removal or clarification of any such provision provides both constitutional assurance that the practice of slavery will not be condoned in any state and acknowledgement of past injustices that were enconced in the foundational documents of many states.

THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) urges the legislative bodies of all states to scrutinize and remove language contained in their state constitutions in order to remove or clarify any provision that could reasonably be interpreted to permit slavery under some circumstances or otherwise condone slavery; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

**Resolution ID: LJE-23-08**

**Sponsored by: Rep. Larry Miller (TN)**

**Policy Committee: Law, Justice, and Ethics (LJE)**