

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 51st Legislature (2007)

3 HOUSE CONCURRENT  
4 RESOLUTION 1026 \_\_\_\_\_

By: Wesselhoft of the House

5 and

6 Eason McIntyre of the  
7 Senate

8  
9 AS INTRODUCED

10 A Concurrent Resolution declaring November 16, 2007,  
11 as Oklahoma's 100th birthday; celebrating the state's  
12 centennial; and directing distribution.

13  
14 WHEREAS, Oklahoma, for more than its century's formal existence,  
15 has become a symbol of great promise achieved through arduous work!  
16 Its courageous and tenacious inhabitants, with unmatched survival  
17 skills, have been endued with a great pioneering spirit. It is with  
18 such qualities that we approach our state's centennial, and with  
19 such advantages that we go forward in the next century to even  
20 greater accomplishments; and

21 WHEREAS, Oklahoma is larger than many of the great nations of  
22 the planet, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Ireland or  
23 England; and  
24

1       WHEREAS, in earlier centuries, Spain, France and Great Britain  
2 laid claim to what is now Oklahoma. Fourteen flags would eventually  
3 fly over our red-clay land; and

4       WHEREAS, several Indian tribes, including the Quapaw, Choctaw  
5 and Osage, rightfully laid claim to areas of future Oklahoma. The  
6 Osage in northeastern Oklahoma's tallgrass prairies; Quapaw in  
7 eastern Oklahoma, ravaged by measles, smallpox and other European  
8 diseases; the Wichita and Caddo in the southwest; and the Plains  
9 Apache and Comanche in western Oklahoma all lived here and worked  
10 the land; and

11       WHEREAS, Indians and white settlers established farms and towns,  
12 and trappers and traders came here to hunt fur-bearing animals which  
13 they supplied to both Indians and others; and

14       WHEREAS, with the forced removal of the Five Civilized Tribes,  
15 the Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw and Seminole made their new  
16 home in Indian Territory. Later, many other tribes including, but  
17 not limited to, the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, Apache,  
18 Ponca, Tonkawa, Sac & Fox, Pottawatomie, Shawnee, Iowa, and Kickapoo  
19 made their home in the future state and would have many towns,  
20 cities and counties named on their behalf; and

21       WHEREAS, the pressure to open unoccupied Indian land to white  
22 settlement grew steadily from the end of the Civil War until the  
23 Land Run of 1889; and

24

1       WHEREAS, the Land Run started at high noon on April 22, 1889,  
2 with an estimated 50,000 people lined up for their piece of the  
3 available two million acres (3,125 square miles; 8,093 square  
4 kilometers); and

5       WHEREAS, by the end of April 22, both Oklahoma City and Guthrie  
6 were cities of around 10,000 people, established in literally half a  
7 day. As *Harpers Weekly* put it: "Unlike Rome, the city of Guthrie  
8 was built in a day. To be strictly accurate in the matter, it might  
9 be said that it was built in an afternoon. At twelve o'clock on  
10 Monday, April 22d, the resident population of Guthrie was nothing;  
11 before sundown it was at least ten thousand. In that time streets  
12 had been laid out, town lots staked off, and steps taken toward the  
13 formation of a municipal government"; and

14       WHEREAS, many settlers immediately started improving their new  
15 land or stood in line waiting to file their claim. Many children  
16 sold creek water to homesteaders waiting in line for five cents a  
17 cup, while other children gathered buffalo chips to provide fuel for  
18 cooking. By the second week, schools had opened and were being  
19 taught by volunteers paid by pupils' parents until regular school  
20 districts could be established. Within one month, Oklahoma City had  
21 five banks and six newspapers; and

22       WHEREAS, the Land Run of 1889 was the first land run into the  
23 Unassigned Lands and included all or part of the modern-day  
24

1 Canadian, Cleveland, Kingfisher, Logan, Oklahoma, and Payne Counties  
2 of Oklahoma; and

3 WHEREAS, in 1890, Congress designated the land as the "Twin  
4 Territories" of Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory; and

5 WHEREAS, Oklahoma's present state government had its beginning  
6 during the territorial period. The guide for forming a government  
7 for Oklahoma Territory was a law passed by Congress in 1890, the  
8 Oklahoma Organic Act. This law provided for a Governor, a  
9 Secretary, and a Supreme Court of three judges. President Benjamin  
10 Harrison appointed these officials. The act provided for a  
11 Legislature and a congressional delegate to be elected by the voters  
12 of Oklahoma Territory; and

13 WHEREAS, the Oklahoma Organic Act divided Oklahoma Territory  
14 into temporary counties and provided for county and town  
15 governments, and required the territorial capital be located in  
16 Guthrie. President Benjamin Harrison appointed Republican George W.  
17 Steele of Indiana to be the first governor of Oklahoma Territory;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, for several years, land runs brought thousands of  
20 people to Indian Territory seeking a better life, including nearly a  
21 thousand black pioneers. In the years before and especially after  
22 the great land runs, nearly fifty black towns dotted the future  
23 state. On horseback and on foot, African-Americans sought  
24 opportunity and refuge from oppression; and

1       WHEREAS, most of the early settlers of future Oklahoma, whether  
2 Indian, white or black, were primarily interested in agriculture  
3 activities. These dedicated workers would eventually turn a hard  
4 land into the foundation for the great economy of the state. "We  
5 know we belong to the land and the land we belong to is grand" is  
6 true to life; and

7       WHEREAS, Oklahoma has long been one of the principal petroleum-  
8 and natural-gas-producing states of the nation. Many maps made by  
9 early explorers and settlers identified several places as oil  
10 springs. Today, there are a number of giant oil and gas fields and  
11 their worth greatly enriches our economy and state; and

12       WHEREAS, other assets, such as aviation, would come to enrich  
13 the future state. Oklahoma's pioneering aviators and recent cadre  
14 of astronauts make Oklahoma's contribution to aviation one of the  
15 greatest in the nation; and

16       WHEREAS, during the territorial period, the Oklahoma Legislature  
17 established the foundation of future state government. Laws adopted  
18 by the territorial Legislature created counties and courts,  
19 established the system of public schools, and began formation of the  
20 Oklahoma university and college system. The first territorial  
21 Legislature created three institutions of higher learning: the  
22 University of Oklahoma at Norman, the Oklahoma Agricultural and  
23 Mechanical College at Stillwater, and the Oklahoma Normal School at  
24

1 Edmond. The Normal School would train teachers for the public  
2 schools of Oklahoma Territory; and

3 WHEREAS, white settlers were eager for statehood and held  
4 conventions each year. However, Congress did not act on Oklahoma  
5 statehood because most congressmen believed Oklahoma Territory  
6 should be joined with Indian Territory to form a single, large  
7 state. Until this was done, Congress refused to take any final  
8 action on Oklahoma statehood. In 1893, Congress passed a law that  
9 extended the Dawes Allotment Act to the Five Civilized Tribes. By  
10 1902, the Dawes Commission had signed allotment agreements with all  
11 of the Five Civilized Tribes and began to assign allotment. There  
12 were no surplus lands for homesteaders; and

13 WHEREAS, the Curtis Act, passed by Congress in 1898, ended  
14 tribal rule. The Curtis Act substituted federal law for the laws of  
15 the Indian governments. It provided for surveying of townships and  
16 it extended voting rights to more than a half-million non-Indian  
17 permit holders. The Curtis Act abolished tribal courts and made  
18 Indian citizens subject to federal courts. With allotment completed  
19 and tribal governments abolished, statehood was possible; and

20 WHEREAS, leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes opposed joining  
21 Oklahoma Territory. They wanted to form an all-Indian state named  
22 "Sequoyah". Leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes met at Muskogee in  
23 1905 where Creek Chief Pleasant Porter was elected president of the  
24 Sequoyah Convention. Alexander Posey, Creek poet and journalist,

1 was elected secretary. The delegates wrote a constitution for the  
2 proposed state of Sequoyah. It was approved by the voters of Indian  
3 Territory, but Congress refused to consider it. They were preparing  
4 to join the Twin Territories, Oklahoma Territory and Indian  
5 Territory, to form the state of Oklahoma; and

6 WHEREAS, after much political wrangling, on June 16, 1906,  
7 Congress passed the Oklahoma Enabling Act. It permitted the people  
8 of Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory to join and write a  
9 constitution and seek admission as the 46th state of the Union; and

10 WHEREAS, the Constitutional Convention was to meet in Guthrie,  
11 and was to consist of 112 delegates. Fifty-five delegates were to  
12 be elected from Oklahoma Territory, fifty-five from Indian  
13 Territory, and two delegates were to be elected from Osage Nation;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, during the summer of 1906, voters in the Twin  
16 Territories elected Convention delegates. Democrat delegates won  
17 one hundred of the Convention seats, while Republicans won twelve;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, the Convention convened November 20, 1906. Democrat  
20 William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was elected president (or chairman)  
21 of the Convention. Murray was a powerful influence in the  
22 Convention partly because of his role in the ill-fated Sequoyah  
23 Convention. Murray's majority floor leader was Charles N. Haskell.  
24 The Republican leader in the Convention was Henry Asp; and

1       WHEREAS, experts in every area of government appeared before the  
2 delegates. The only woman allowed to speak to the Convention was  
3 Kate Barnard, a five-foot, 90-pound social reformer who wrote the  
4 child labor and mine safety provisions of the proposed constitution.  
5 She would honor her state by becoming the first woman in the United  
6 States to be elected to a statewide office. Her work made possible  
7 social reforms including the eight-hour workday in mines and on  
8 public works, and the forbidding of child labor; and

9       WHEREAS, delegates worked through the winter and drafted a  
10 constitution that created three departments for the new government.  
11 The executive branch consisted of a governor and eleven other  
12 executive officials. The legislative branch consisted of a house of  
13 representatives and a senate. The judicial branch was to be made up  
14 of a supreme court, district courts, county courts, and municipal  
15 courts; and

16       WHEREAS, the new Constitution included provisions for initiative  
17 and referendum. Citizens could propose laws and could vote on laws  
18 submitted to them by the Legislature. Prohibition, banning the sale  
19 of alcoholic beverages, was included. The Constitution, as a  
20 document, was second in length only to Louisiana's among the states  
21 and far exceeded the length of the federal Constitution; and

22       WHEREAS, an election in the Twin Territories was held on  
23 September 17, 1907, and the people approved the Constitution and  
24 elected Charles N. Haskell as the state's first governor, upon

1 approval of the U.S. Congress. The Constitution was sent to  
2 Washington, D.C., and after some study, Congress approved it on  
3 November 16, 1907, making Oklahoma the 46th state; and

4 WHEREAS, Oklahomans look forward to celebrating the state's  
5 centennial birthday on November 16, 2007.

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
7 OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 51ST OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE  
8 CONCURRING THEREIN:

9 THAT the Oklahoma Legislature does hereby declare November 16,  
10 2007, as Oklahoma's 100th birthday.

11 THAT Oklahomans are called upon to celebrate the state's  
12 centennial, and have a responsibility to teach our state's history.

13 THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Governor Brad  
14 Henry, Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins, all members of Oklahoma's  
15 Congressional Delegation, and the Oklahoma Historical Society.

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17 51-1-7670 JJB 03/29/07

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