

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I want to put a couple of things into the record as to why I don't want my name on this resolution. I think of the words of the Declaration of Independence where when they were going to break from Britain, the colonists, they stated that "a decent respect for the opinion of mankind demands that they should state the causes that impelled them to the separation." So I am in a position as a black man in a country where black people are oppressed and denied many rights and privileges...I am in a position which is often made difficult by activities such as the one which is occurring this morning. I can understand the elation, the happiness, the joy of the families and loved ones of those who are coming back from Iran, but I am also keenly aware at a time like this, of the rights and privileges within this country that people like me do not enjoy at this very moment. So it would be highly cynical and hypocritical for me to endorse a resolution calling for a State Freedom Day when I don't have freedom, a National Freedom Day when people like me all over the country don't have freedom. I can view the resurgence of the Ku-Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party, I look at the multitude of deaths among young black children in Atlanta, Georgia, the deaths of black people in Buffalo, New York, including two where the hearts of the individuals were cut out after they were killed, and it is impossible for me to share in the glow that people feel this morning. I looked at the resolution and there is a part of one of the whereases that I couldn't even agree with. It states, "people who have remained loyal to their government while captured". Loyalty should not be extended to a government. It can be extended to a country or to the constitution of those principles for which the government supposedly stands, but the government is not one, it is not an entity which can demand loyalty. Treason is not committed by being against the government. Treason is committed by taking actions against the country and what it stands for. So there are some provisions in the resolution itself that I could not go for. And I understand that there are people who are not interested in what I have to say on this floor, but I am speaking to a wider audience. And because of the nature of the Legislature it is extremely difficult to have the job of representation that I have. It is difficult knowing that what you say will never strike a responsive chord, knowing that people can talk about freedom when they know that citizens within this country are not free, is indeed