



General Assembly

**House Joint
Resolution No. 115**

January Session, 2009

LCO No. 5066

05066 _____ JUD

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

Introduced by:
(JUD)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING CERTAIN CONVICTIONS IN COLONIAL
CONNECTICUT.**

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 WHEREAS, in colonial Connecticut various men and women were
2 accused by their neighbors and townsfolk of practicing witchcraft; and

3 WHEREAS, such accusations were made for a variety of reasons;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, such accusations were sometimes made because a
6 person was associated with the sudden and unexplained illness of
7 another person, or predicted the illness or recovery from illness of
8 another person, or had knowledge of past or future events; and

9 WHEREAS, such accusations were sometimes made simply because
10 a person habitually muttered to himself or herself, or talked to unseen
11 persons, or used vulgar language, or gave evil looks, or was a
12 notorious liar, or was a nonconformist, or caused discord among his or
13 her neighbors; and

14 WHEREAS, some of the accused persons were indicted and put on
15 trial for practicing witchcraft; and

16 WHEREAS, these trials were conducted without the evidentiary
17 procedures and safeguards that are standard in Connecticut's criminal
18 justice system today; and

19 WHEREAS, some of the accused persons were found guilty of
20 practicing witchcraft and sentenced to death by hanging.

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that although the facts of
22 the accusations, prosecutions, trials and executions of persons for
23 practicing witchcraft in colonial Connecticut cannot be undone or
24 changed, the General Assembly declares its belief that such
25 proceedings, even if lawful under the then existing law of the colony of
26 Connecticut, were shocking, and the result of community-wide
27 hysteria and fear, and that no disgrace or cause for distress should
28 attach to the descendants of these accused and convicted persons by
29 reason of such proceedings; and

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the adoption of this resolution
31 does not bestow on the state, any political subdivision of the state or
32 any person any right that did not exist prior to its adoption, or
33 authorize any suit or other proceeding, or deprive any party to a suit
34 or other proceeding of any defense that such party previously had, or
35 affect in any way the title to or rights in any real or personal property,
36 or require or permit the remission of any penalty, fine or forfeiture
37 previously imposed or incurred.