



General Assembly

**House Joint
Resolution No. 34**

January Session, 2023

LCO No. 3692



Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY

Introduced by:
(JUD)

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

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 WHEREAS, the courts in the early colonies of Connecticut and New
2 Haven indicted at least thirty-four women and men for the alleged
3 crime of witchcraft and convicted twelve of them, executing eleven,
4 and it is now accepted by the historical profession and society as a
5 whole that all the accused were innocent of such charges, and

6 WHEREAS, legal procedures differed at the time and many
7 practices of the court would no longer meet modern standards of
8 proof, so that the miscarriage of justice was facilitated by such
9 procedures, and

10 WHEREAS, the status of women was radically different than it is
11 today, and misogyny played a large part in the trials and in denying
12 defendants their rights and dignity,

13 WHEREAS, community strife and panic combined with
14 overwhelming fear and superstition led to these accusations of alleged

15 witchcraft and the subsequent suffering of those accused.

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that all of the formally
17 convicted and executed are exonerated of all alleged crimes relating to
18 the charges of witchcraft. The legislature proclaims the innocence of
19 the following convicted and executed people: Alice Young in 1647,
20 Mary Johnson in 1648, Joan Carrington in 1651, John Carrington in
21 1651, Goodwife Bassett in 1651, Goodwife Knapp in 1653, Lydia
22 Gilbert in 1654, Mary Sanford in 1662, Nathaniel Greensmith in 1663,
23 Rebecca Greensmith in 1663, and Mary Barnes in 1663; and one
24 Elizabeth Seager convicted and reprieved in 1665.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that those who were indicted, forced
26 to flee, banished or even acquitted continued to live with their
27 reputations destroyed and their family names tarnished, will have
28 their reputations restored and no longer have disgrace attached to
29 their names, now, being in good standing in Connecticut. The
30 following indicted who were not convicted but still suffered greatly
31 after indictments were: Goodwife Bailey in 1655, Nicholas Bailey in
32 1655, Elizabeth Godman in 1655, Elizabeth Garlick in 1658, Unknown
33 person in Saybrook in 1659, Margaret Jennings in 1661, Nicholas
34 Jennings in 1661, Judith Varlet in 1662, Andrew Sanford in 1662,
35 William Ayers in 1662, Judith Ayers in 1662, James Wakely in 1662,
36 Katherine Harrison in 1668 and 1669, William Graves in 1667,
37 Elizabeth Clawson in 1692, Hugh Crosia in 1692, Mercy Disborough in
38 1692, Mary Harvey in 1692, Hannah Harvey in 1692, Mary Staples in
39 1692, Winifred Benham in 1697, and Winifred Benham Jr. in 1697.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State of Connecticut
41 apologizes to the descendants of all those who were indicted,
42 convicted and executed and for the harm done to the accused persons'
43 posterity to the present day, and acknowledges the trauma and shame
44 that wrongfully continued to affect the families of the accused.

JUD *Joint Favorable*