



League of United Latin American Citizens

LULAC RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF POSTHUMOUS PARDON OF THE LATE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION JACK JOHNSON

Whereas, John Arthur "Jack" Johnson, born in Galveston, Texas in 1878 to former slaves, became a professional boxer and in 1908, defeated Tommy Burns, the reigning White title-holder, Jack Johnson became the first African-American Heavyweight Champion of the World; and

Whereas, after Jack Johnson beat Tommy Burns, former white champion, Jim Jeffries was recruited out of retirement as the "great white hope" to fight Johnson in 1910 in Reno Nevada but lost; which led to rioting, anger and racially motivated murder of African-Americans throughout the United States; and

Whereas, Jack Johnson was defiant and challenged racial biases, he enjoyed dating White women thus creating the resentment of Whites; between 1901 and 1910, 754 African-Americans were lynched, some for simply being "too familiar" with White women; and

Whereas, on June 25, 2010 Congress passed the Mann Act commonly known as the "White Slave Traffic Act" which outlawed the transportation of women in interstate or foreign commerce "for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose"; and

Whereas, Jack Johnson became involved with a White woman in 1912 whose mother disapproved of their relationship, complained to the Justice Department, claiming Jack Johnson had abducted her daughter; and

Whereas, on October 18, 1912 Jack Johnson was arrested by Federal marshals, for transporting the woman across State lines for an "immoral purpose" in violation of the Mann Act, but charges were dropped when the woman refused to cooperate with Federal authorities, and then married Jack Johnson; and

Whereas, Federal law enforcement continued their quest and summoned a White woman, Belle Schreiber, who testified that Johnson transported her across State lines for the purpose of "prostitution and debauchery"; resulting in the 1913 conviction and sentencing of 1 year and 1 day, of Johnson under the Mann Act; and

Whereas, Jack Johnson fled the United States to Canada and various European and South American countries and lost the Heavyweight Championship title to Jess Willard in Cuba in 1915; and

Whereas, in June of 1920 Jack Johnson returned to the U.S., surrendered to authorities, served nearly a year in a Federal penitentiary, upon his release continued fighting, but never regained the Championship title; and

Whereas, Jack Johnson served the U.S. during WW II by promoting and fighting in exhibition bouts for the sale of war bonds, died in a car accident in 1946 and in 1954 was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that LULAC joins members of Congress, the World Boxing Council, former and current World Champions, distinguished American scholars and citizens in support of passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 6 and House Concurrent Resolution 14 that expresses Jack Johnson's conviction was racially motivated and urges the President to posthumously pardon Jack Johnson for this reason and in recognition of his athletic achievement.

Approved this 11th day of July 2015

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President