

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE 800TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAGNA CARTA**

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

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LONG TITLE

General Description:

This joint resolution of the Legislature recognizes the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ recognizes the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta; and
- ▶ recognizes that principles embodied in the Magna Carta, including freedom, justice, the rule of law, and that no leader is above the law, have stood the test of time and



27 sustain free people and nations today.

28 **Special Clauses:**

29 None



31 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

32 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta is an 800-year-old document, marked by the seal of King
33 John of England in 1215, containing the idea that no one is above the law;

34 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta still forms the foundation of many modern ideas and
35 documents today;

36 WHEREAS, Magna Carta means "Great Charter" in Latin;

37 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta was not the first document in which a monarch agreed in
38 writing to safeguard the rights, privileges, and liberties of the clergy and the nobles by placing
39 limits on the power of the crown;

40 WHEREAS, thirty-four years after the Norman Conquest, Henry I set a precedent on
41 his accession to the throne in 1100 when he issued a royal proclamation, the Coronation
42 Charter, designed to atone for the past abuses of his predecessor, William Rufus;

43 WHEREAS, the principles included in the Coronation Charter dated back to the laws of
44 King Ethelbert of Kent, circa 604, and subsequent laws of the kings of Kent leading up to the
45 end of the first millennium;

46 WHEREAS, even though the Coronation Charter is acknowledged as the precursor to
47 the Magna Carta, it was forgotten or ignored by four kings, and almost one queen, over the
48 course of the next century;

49 WHEREAS, it was only after the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, showed
50 Henry I's 113-year-old proclamation to England's barons that the idea of a new and improved
51 charter took hold;

52 WHEREAS, by this time, other charters containing principles included in the Magna
53 Carta had achieved traction and acquired a heritage, demonstrating that even proclamations of
54 over a 100 years old could be used as leverage and justification to force a reluctant king to
55 respect certain individual liberties;

56 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta originated as a peace treaty between King John and his
57 barons, who had captured London;

58 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta was first drafted in June 1215 and granted by King John,
59 who used his Great Seal to authenticate the document at Runnymede, in Surrey;

60 WHEREAS, despite the pageantry at Runnymede, the Magna Carta suffered a similar,
61 more rapid demise than Henry I's Coronation Charter;

62 WHEREAS, although King John agreed to the Magna Carta at first, he quickly became
63 bitter when its terms were enforced;

64 WHEREAS, King John wrote to Pope Innocent III to get the Magna Carta annulled;

65 WHEREAS, the Pope agreed with King John, saying the Magna Carta was "illegal,
66 unjust, harmful to royal rights and shameful to the English people," and declared the charter
67 "null and void of all validity forever";

68 WHEREAS, by August 1215, the Pope had annulled the document;

69 WHEREAS, full-scale civil war then broke out between King John and his barons,
70 which did not end until after King John's death in 1216;

71 WHEREAS, a more modern version of the Magna Carta was reissued by King John's
72 son, Henry III, in 1225;

73 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta was finally enrolled as part of English law by Edward I
74 in 1297;

75 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta inspired the charismatic Simon de Montfort;

76 WHEREAS, de Montfort, an Anglo-Norman rebel nobleman, convened a parley in a
77 field near Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, in 1264;

78 WHEREAS, the parley was not only in defiance of King Henry III, but was radical in
79 that it provided for democratically elected knights and borough representatives from
80 throughout the kingdom and is recognized as the first directly elected Parliament;

81 WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the English Civil War when the monarchy of Charles
82 II was restored, the Magna Carta helped codify the ancient writ of habeas corpus passed by
83 Parliament in 1679;

84 WHEREAS, this act strengthened the ancient and powerful writ, which had been a
85 feature of English Common Law since before the Magna Carta, and served to safeguard
86 individual liberty by preventing unlawful or arbitrary imprisonment;

87 WHEREAS, ideas of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law to which all are subject
88 and that are such a feature of the Magna Carta, spread to the rebellious colonies of the New

89 World;

90 WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence, as penned by Thomas Jefferson, indicted
91 George III on numerous breaches of English Common Law enshrined within the Magna Carta,
92 to which the 13 colonies were equally bound;

93 WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence, signed July 4, 1776, became the legal
94 justification for the Revolutionary War;

95 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta has become much more than a peace treaty between a
96 quarrelsome king and his barons in 1215;

97 WHEREAS, over the past 800 years, the ideals of the Magna Carta have gathered
98 momentum and assumed a greater authority concerning liberty and justice;

99 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta's lasting iconic value as the foundation of so many world
100 democracies lies in the power of an idea, a principle, which states that nobody, including the
101 king, is above the law of the land;

102 WHEREAS, central clauses of the Magna Carta have not only stood the test of time,
103 but have a potency of their own that has defeated hundreds of attempts at annulment, repeal,
104 modification, and suspension by successive monarchs and governments;

105 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta has transcended barriers of language and the divisions of
106 cultures and ideologies;

107 WHEREAS, the Magna Carta has become an idea that can never be uninvented or
108 unimagined;

109 WHEREAS, 800 years later, the ideas of freedom and justice have become essential
110 parts of humankind;

111 WHEREAS, even today, the Magna Carta is invoked and cited whenever basic
112 freedoms come under threat;

113 WHEREAS, the principles in the Magna Carta will no doubt continue to have a huge
114 influence wherever freedom is under attack;

115 WHEREAS, on the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, it is time to deepen our
116 understanding of the crucial role it has played in the development of human rights, democracy,
117 and liberty; and

118 WHEREAS, there are hundreds of events and activities, including many sponsored by
119 the Magna Carta 2015 Committee, being planned and taking place to commemorate 800 years

120 of the Magna Carta:

121 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
122 recognizes the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta.

123 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah recognizes that
124 principles embodied in the Magna Carta, including freedom, justice, and the rule of law, have
125 stood the test of time and sustained free people and nations today.

126 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to President of the
127 United States, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States
128 House of Representatives, the Magna Carta 2015 Committee, and the members of Utah's
129 congressional delegation.

Legislative Review Note
as of 2-17-15 4:43 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel