



SPONSOR: Sen. Buckson
Sens. Brown, Gay, Hansen, Hocker, Hoffner, Huxtable,
Lawson, Lockman, Mantzavinos, S. McBride, Paradee,
Pettyjohn, Pinkney, Poore, Richardson, Sokola, Sturgeon,
Townsend, Walsh, Wilson

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
152nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 12

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES ISSUE A POSTHUMOUS PARDON TO DELAWARE ABOLITIONIST JOHN HUNN.

1 WHEREAS, John Hunn, born June 25, 1818, was a Quaker abolitionist, often credited as the architect of
2 Delaware's Underground Railroad and, according to the National Park Service, was a "station master" on Delaware's
3 Underground Railroad; and

4 WHEREAS, Hunn, who owned a plantation at the current site of Middletown High School, partnered to fight
5 slavery with other Underground Railroad heroes like Samuel Burris, a free black man, who was pardoned for his so-called
6 "crimes" in 2015 by former Gov. Jack Markell, and the more well-known Thomas Garrett of Wilmington; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1845, Hunn sheltered the Hawkins family, including a married couple and their six children, and
8 assisted them in their escape to freedom by providing food and clothing; and

9 WHEREAS, Hunn was tried alongside Thomas Garrett in 1849 as a part of an effort to derail the Underground
10 Railroad; and

11 WHEREAS, a jury made up mainly of Sussex County enslavers found Hunn and Garrett guilty of aiding runaways
12 and violating the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, according to court transcripts; and

13 WHEREAS, Chief Justice Roger Tanney ordered Hunn to pay exorbitant fines of \$500 per person harbored; as a
14 result, Hunn's land holdings and all his possessions were sold at a sheriff's sale in 1848, leaving the Hunn family destitute;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, a 173-acre portion of the Hunn family land, now owned by Kent County, has been designated "Hunn
17 Nature Park" and opened to the public in 2016; and

18 WHEREAS, this property includes a port to the St Jones River wetlands and appears to have played a role in some
19 of the earliest traces of the Underground Railroad that developed shortly after the Revolutionary War; and

20 WHEREAS, Hunn died in 1894 and is buried at the Camden Friends Meeting site in Camden, where a historical
21 plaque reads in part, "Chief engineer of the Underground Railroad in the State of Delaware"; and

22 WHEREAS, the plaque at his grave quotes Hunn as saying, "I ask no other reward for my efforts than to feel that I
23 have been of service to my fellow men. No other course would have brought peace to my mind"; and

24 WHEREAS, Hunn acted selflessly by taking on incredible personal risks to aid those desperate to break the chains
25 of bondage and to stop the ferocious barbarity of slavery; and

26 WHEREAS, Hunn should be remembered as an Underground Railroad hero rather than a criminal and
27 posthumously pardoned.

28 NOW, THEREFORE:

29 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 152nd General Assembly of the State of Delaware that we respectfully
30 request the President of our United States of America posthumously pardon Delaware abolitionist, Underground Railroad
31 Superintendent, and American Hero John Hunn.

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Kent County should continue to preserve the "Hunn Nature Park" and
33 celebrate the work of John Hunn by investing in the rich history of the property through education, recognition, and the
34 empowerment of people far and wide through one of America's most excellent examples of friendship.

SYNOPSIS

This Senate Resolution respectfully requests the President of our United States of America posthumously pardon the Delaware Underground Railroad hero and abolitionist John Hunn.