

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

House Resolution

H.R. 18

Offered by Representatives Noyes of Wolcott and Bailey of Hyde Park

House resolution supporting the preservation of the Julian Scott birthplace in Johnson

Whereas, Julian Scott (1846–1901) was born in Johnson and studied at Lamoille Academy, and at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, then 15 years of age, he enlisted, with his two brothers, in the 3rd Vermont Infantry Regiment, and

Whereas, deemed too scrawny to carry a gun, the military designated Julian Scott a fife and drum player, a role that also encompassed service as a field medic; and during the 1862 Battle of Lee's Mill in Virginia, the young Vermonter traversed a stream numerous times under heavy Confederate fire to evacuate wounded Union soldiers, and he was awarded the Medal of Honor, one of the first and youngest individuals so honored, and

Whereas, later in 1862, he sustained a serious hip wound during the Battle of White Oak Swamp, also fought in Virginia, then recuperated in New York City, mustered out of the U.S. Army in 1863, studied at the National Academy of Design, and, through the generous financial support of a benefactor, continued his art education in Europe under the tutelage of the German-born artist Emanuel Leutze, who is famous for his early 1850s historical painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, and

Whereas, in 1870, the General Assembly commissioned Julian Scott to paint a mural commemorating Vermont's Civil War role, and

Whereas, the Battle of Cedar Creek, as the Civil War military engagement involving the most Vermonters, was the topic selected, and the resulting masterpiece, the 10-by-20 foot *The First Vermont Brigade at the Battle of Cedar Creek* (October 19, 1864), dominates the beautifully restored Cedar Creek Room in the State House, and four other Julian Scott paintings, *The Rear Guard at White Oak Swamp*; *The Mounted Sentry*; a portrait of General William Farrar Smith; and the most recent addition, *The Fourth Vermont Forming Under Fire*, which is on loan, are also displayed, and

Whereas, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) administers a program that grants funds to political subdivisions to purchase, for demolition, homes and businesses that are repeatedly damaged in natural disasters, and

Whereas, during the severe July 2023 flood, the slate-blue house built in 1840 and located at 384 Lower Main Street in Johnson, where Julian Scott was

born and raised, was severely damaged, and although neither architecturally striking nor maintained as a museum or art gallery, a State historic marker flanks the property, and

Whereas, an April 15, 2026, article published in the *Seven Days* newspaper reported, “it doesn’t appear that the state ever conveyed that historically relevant information [the connection between the home and one of Vermont’s greatest painters] when it applied for a hazard mitigation grant in 2024,” and

Whereas, according to the news article, on December 9, 2024, FEMA notified the State in writing that the Julian Scott home, along with 13 other properties in the vicinity, qualified for the federal buyout program, and

Whereas, the FEMA letter informing the State of this decision made no mention of Julian Scott, but it designated the home as the Patch-Shattuck House, referring to the owners as of 1992, and

Whereas, according to the President of the Johnson Historical Society, who only learned of the demolition plans shortly before the town purchased the home on January 29, 2026, when town officials initially saw the proposed demolition list, they did not realize that one of the properties was the Julian Scott birthplace, and

Whereas, the topic was only discussed at a Johnson Selectboard meeting on January 22, 2026, a week prior to the purchase, and

Whereas, the State Historic Preservation Officer, while acknowledging the importance of Julian Scott in Vermont history, cited the danger the building posed to the public, the lack of any Julian Scott–related items in the house, and the structural changes that have occurred over the years that “have detracted from its original character and significance,” and

Whereas, the Julian Scott birthplace was slated for demolition on or before April 29, 2026, and once this fact was widely publicized, opposition, especially in the Town of Johnson, increased, and

Whereas, on April 20, 2026, all five members of the Johnson Selectboard wrote a letter on the town’s behalf to Governor Philip B. Scott, requesting his intervention to preserve the Julian Scott birthplace, and

Whereas, the Johnson Selectboard also requested FEMA to grant a delay of the demolition date to allow the town to propose a preservation plan, and

Whereas, FEMA has granted the Town of Johnson a 90-day reprieve to develop an alternative proposal, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body supports the Town of Johnson’s efforts to preserve the Julian Scott birthplace and urges the Governor to direct the Division for Historic Preservation to work with the town on this project and to declare his public endorsement of this initiative, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Johnson Town Clerk, to the State Historic Preservation Officer, to Governor Philip B. Scott, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.