



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 24-1004

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Bacon and Ricks, English, Herod, Jodeh, Joseph, Amabile, Bird, Bockenfeld, Boesenecker, Brown, Clifford, Daugherty, deGruy Kennedy, Duran, Evans, Froelich, Garcia, Hamrick, Hernandez, Kipp, Lieder, Lindsay, Lindstedt, Lukens, Lynch, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, Mauro, McCormick, McLachlan, Ortiz, Parenti, Rutinel, Sirota, Snyder, Soper, Story, Taggart, Valdez, Velasco, Weinberg, Weissman, Willford, Woodrow, Young, McCluskie;

also SENATOR(S) Buckner and Fields, Coleman, Exum, Baisley, Bridges, Cutter, Danielson, Gardner, Ginal, Gonzales, Hansen, Hinrichsen, Jaquez Lewis, Kirkmeyer, Kolker, Liston, Lundeen, Marchman, Michaelson Jenet, Pelton B., Pelton R., Priola, Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Simpson, Smallwood, Sullivan, Van Winkle, Will, Winter F., Zenzinger, Fenberg.

CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

WHEREAS, The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, graduated from Morehouse College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948, graduated from Crozer Theological Seminary in 1951, and received a Ph.D. from Boston University in 1955; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's faith, resiliency, and commitment to justice became known worldwide through his speeches, writings, and actions; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King declared that the moral responsibility to aid the oppressed did not stop at the edge of his street, town, or state when he wrote, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King, like thousands of other African Americans, withstood attacks on his home and family, among numerous other threats and setbacks, but stood firm in his conviction that "although the arc of the moral universe is long ... it bends toward justice"; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King embodied civil disobedience. In confronting hatred and violence, Rev. Dr. King, along with others in the civil rights movement, created constructive tension by being intentionally nonviolent but direct, urgent but strategic, in their actions. This tension compelled examination of Jim Crow laws and our country's structures and systems that favored White Americans in access to safety, education, jobs, homes, and voting -- without which true civil rights could never be achieved. The urgency required confronting the myths that time will inevitably cure all ills and that progress toward equal rights is inevitable; and

WHEREAS, In a letter from the Birmingham jail, Rev. Dr. King wrote that "it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say 'wait'," but asking African Americans to wait for courts or for minds to change on their own was a continued miscarriage of justice. He wrote, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed"; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King led the Montgomery bus boycott, a 13-month protest beginning in 1955, against the segregated city bus lines; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery bus boycott led to the integration of the Montgomery city bus system and is widely credited as the beginning of the civil rights movement in America; and

WHEREAS, In 1957, Rev. Dr. King was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide leadership for the burgeoning civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Between 1957 and 1968, Rev. Dr. King spoke more than 2,500 times, wrote five books as well as numerous articles, led protests, helped register African American voters, was arrested more than 20 times, was awarded five honorary degrees, was named Man of the Year by Time magazine, and became the symbolic leader of the African American community as well as a world figure; and

WHEREAS, On August 28, 1963, Rev. Dr. King directed the March on Washington, at which more than 200,000 Americans gathered in the name of equality and civil rights and which culminated in Rev. Dr. King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech; and

WHEREAS, The leadership of Rev. Dr. King was instrumental in bringing about landmark legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited segregation in public accommodations and facilities and banned discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which eliminated for disenfranchised African American voters the remaining legal barriers to voting; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Rev. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his tireless and selfless work in the pursuit of justice for African Americans and other oppressed people in America; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's 13 years of nonviolent leadership ended abruptly and tragically when, on April 4, 1968, he was assassinated while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's life and work continue to echo in our lives as we strive to reach the lofty goal he set when he said, "Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty"; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in Colorado was championed for 10 years by Representatives Wellington and Wilma Webb in the hope that the acknowledgment of the holiday would demonstrate Colorado's commitment to confronting and ending racial injustices. In 1974, Representative Wellington Webb first introduced a resolution to acknowledge the holiday and, in 1975, introduced a bill to do the same. Although these efforts were initially unsuccessful, the work nevertheless continued. In 1985, Representative Wilma Webb championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April 4 of that same year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into law; and

WHEREAS, Colorado's enactment of the holiday and the annual Marade -- a merging of the words "march" and "parade" -- predated the federal holiday designation, and the first celebration in Colorado was on January 20, 1986; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's birthday is a federal holiday in the United States and a state holiday in the state of Colorado, and is celebrated each year on the third Monday in January; and

WHEREAS, On Monday, January 15, 2024, we celebrate the thirty-eighth anniversary of Rev. Dr. King's holiday; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:

That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, hereby encourage appropriate observances, ceremonies, and activities to commemorate the federal and state legal holiday honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., throughout all cities, towns, counties, school districts, and local governments within Colorado.

Be It Further Resolved, That the legislature commends the continued teaching of Rev. Dr. King's legacy and nonviolent principles that have been recently added to Colorado's seventh-grade social studies standards. The legislature also calls upon Colorado public schools to continue to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. King by actively teaching Rev. Dr. King's cause for leadership and nonviolent principles as a response to the forces of hatred, racism, and violence in our society. In this way, Colorado and Colorado educators can lead the way in showing a new generation a path to a better, more prosperous, and more peaceful future for all.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to President Joe Biden, Honorable Governor Jared Polis, the Honorable Wilma and Wellington Webb, the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and the members of Colorado's congressional delegation: Senators Michael Bennet and

John Hickenlooper and Representatives Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Lauren Boebert, Ken Buck, Doug Lamborn, Jason Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and Yadira Caraveo.

Julie McCluskie
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
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