

By Senators Wilson, Bullard, Hill, Joyner, Lawson and Rich

33-2555A-07

1	Senate Resolution
2	A resolution recognizing April 30, 2007, as
3	Bessie "Queen Bess" Coleman Day in the State of
4	Florida.
5	
6	WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman was of African-American and
7	Native-American descent, and
8	WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman experienced racial and gender
9	discrimination in the United States and could not gain access
10	to American Flight Schools while yearning to "amount to
11	something" in American society, and
12	WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman learned French and secured
13	funding to receive a passport with French and English Visas
14	and departed for France in November 1920 to attend the flight
15	school at the Ecole d'Aviation des Freres Caudon at Le Crotoy
16	in the Sommes, and
17	WHEREAS, on June 15, 1921, Bessie Coleman received her
18	license from the prestigious Federation Aeronautique
19	Internationale (FAI) and became the first
20	African-American/Native-American female licensed pilot in the
21	world, and
22	WHEREAS, in 1921, Bessie Coleman returned to a
23	segregated United States, yet she still became a media
24	sensation, performing in air shows across the country, and
25	WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman refused to perform at air shows
26	unless the audiences were desegregated and everyone used the
27	same gates, and
28	WHEREAS, in August 1922, Bessie Coleman outlined to
29	reporters the objectives she intended to pursue for the
30	remainder of her life - that she would be a leader in
31	introducing aviation to her race and founded a school for

1 | aviators of any race, because American flight schools were
2 | closed to people of color under "Jim Crow" laws, and

3 | WHEREAS, in January 1926, she returned to the East
4 | Coast, where she had signed up for a number of speaking
5 | engagements and exhibition flights in Georgia and Florida, and

6 | WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman opened up a beauty shop in
7 | Orlando, Florida, to hasten her accumulation of funds to start
8 | her aviation school, and

9 | WHEREAS, in Florida she met the Reverend Hezekiah Keith
10 | Hill and his wife, Viola Tillinghast, community activists from
11 | Orlando, who invited her to stay with them, and

12 | WHEREAS, on April 30, 1926, Bessie Coleman met an
13 | untimely death while preparing for a benefit exhibition for
14 | the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League over the Jacksonville
15 | Paxon Airport, and

16 | WHEREAS, upon her death, Bessie Coleman finally
17 | received recognition for her contributions to American
18 | Aviation when William J. Powell established her flying school
19 | in 1929, known as the Bessie Coleman Aero Club, and

20 | WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman's legacy produced such notable
21 | flyers as the Five Blackbirds, the Flying Hobo's, Willa Brown,
22 | Janet Bragg, John Robinson, Cornelius Coffey, Harold Hurd, and
23 | the Tuskegee Airmen, and opened the door for people of all
24 | races to pursue aviation and aerospace technology careers in
25 | the United States and worldwide, NOW, THEREFORE,

26 |
27 | Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

28 |
29 | That April 30, 2007, is recognized as Bessie "Queen
30 | Bess" Coleman Day in the State of Florida.

31 |