

By Senator Hill

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Senate Resolution

A resolution celebrating and honoring the heroic life, vibrant leadership, and historic accomplishments of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was an American clergyman, a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, one of the principal leaders of the American Civil Rights

Movement, and a prominent advocate of nonviolent protest, and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King was born Michael Luther King, in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, and later renamed after his father, Martin Luther King, Sr., when he was about 6 years old, and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr., attended local segregated public schools, excelling in his studies; entered Morehouse College at age 15 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Sociology; graduated from Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania with honors; and earned a doctorate in systematic theology from Boston University, and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Dr. King was instrumental in founding the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which began as an organization of black churches and ministers whose goal was to challenge racial segregation and complement the NAACP's legal efforts to dismantle segregation through the courts, and

WHEREAS, in the 1950s and 60s, Dr. King led a series of protest campaigns against segregated restaurants, hotels, housing, schools, and transit facilities which gained national attention, helping to convince many white Americans and others to support the cause of Civil Rights in the United States, and

1 WHEREAS, in April 1963, Dr. King was arrested and sent
2 to jail during one of these demonstrations and wrote a letter
3 from his jail cell to a local clergyman who had criticized him
4 for creating disorder in the city, a letter that became known
5 as the "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," in which he argued
6 that individuals have the moral right and responsibility to
7 disobey unjust laws, and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. King provided consummate guidance and
9 insight to the Civil Rights Movement, crafting a proposal for
10 radical social change based on the inspired principles of
11 nonviolent protest which ultimately achieved benchmark changes
12 in the law and improved the possibilities for millions of
13 people who had been marginalized by a history of racism, and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. King and other black leaders brought the
15 Civil Rights Movement to the attention of the country and the
16 world by organizing the 1963 March on Washington, a massive
17 peaceful protest that drew more than 200,000 participants and
18 at which he delivered his magnificent "I Have a Dream" speech,
19 and

20 WHEREAS, that speech and Dr. King's marches in
21 Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, created the political momentum
22 that resulted in the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of
23 1964, which prohibited segregation in public accommodations
24 and prohibited discrimination in education and employment, and
25 also resulted in the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of
26 1965, which was fundamental in guaranteeing the rights of full
27 citizenship to blacks in America, and

28 WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was
29 named "Person of the Year" for 1963 by Time Magazine, and in
30 the article about him Dr. King is quoted as saying "the
31 quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what is

1 | important. If you are cut down in a movement that is designed
2 | to save the soul of a nation, then no other death could be
3 | more redemptive," and

4 | WHEREAS, on December 10, 1964, the Reverend Dr. Martin
5 | Luther King, Jr., was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and in
6 | his acceptance speech he stated: "I think Alfred Nobel would
7 | know what I mean when I say that I accept this award in the
8 | spirit of a curator of some precious heirloom which he holds
9 | in trust for its true owners - all those to whom beauty is
10 | truth and truth beauty - and in whose eyes the beauty of
11 | genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds
12 | or silver or gold," and

13 | WHEREAS, Dr. King was tragically assassinated in
14 | Memphis on April 4, 1968, and his death is still mourned by
15 | millions worldwide as a bitter sacrifice to the great ideals
16 | he represented to us - social justice, equal rights and
17 | opportunity, and the brotherhood of mankind, and

18 | WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, was the first national
19 | celebration of Dr. King's birthday as a Federal Holiday, NOW,
20 | THEREFORE,

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22 | Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

23 |

24 | That the Senate pauses in its deliberations to honor
25 | the memory, and celebrate the 78th birthday, of a great
26 | American leader, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
27 | whose inspired moral leadership and courage guided our nation
28 | through an immense struggle for civil and human rights and
29 | whose example continues to inspire us in our efforts to
30 | complete that work.

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