

By Senator Joyner

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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, 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 1960s, 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

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30 WHEREAS, in April 1963, Dr. King was arrested and sent to
31 jail during one of these demonstrations and wrote a letter from
32 his jail cell to a local clergyman who had criticized him for
33 creating disorder in the city, a letter that became known as the
34 "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," in which Dr. King argued that
35 individuals have the moral right and responsibility to disobey
36 unjust laws, and

37 WHEREAS, Dr. King provided consummate guidance and insight
38 to the Civil Rights Movement, crafting a proposal for radical
39 social change based on the inspired principles of nonviolent
40 protest which ultimately achieved benchmark changes in the law
41 and improved the possibilities of millions of people who had been
42 marginalized by a history of racism, and

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

48 WHEREAS, that speech and Dr. King's marches in Birmingham
49 and Selma, Alabama, created the political momentum that resulted
50 in the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which
51 prohibited segregation in public accommodations, prohibited
52 discrimination in education and employment, and also resulted in
53 the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was
54 fundamental in guaranteeing the rights of full citizenship to
55 African Americans, and

56 WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was named
57 "Person of the Year" for 1963 by Time Magazine, and in the
58 article about him, Dr. King is quoted as saying "the quality, not

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59 | the longevity, of one's life is what is important. If you are cut
60 | down in a movement that is designed to save the soul of a nation,
61 | then no other death could be more redemptive," and

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

70 | WHEREAS, Dr. King was tragically assassinated in Memphis on
71 | April 4, 1968, and his death continues to be mourned by millions
72 | worldwide as a bitter sacrifice to the great ideals he
73 | represented to us - social justice, equal rights and opportunity,
74 | and the brotherhood of mankind, and

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

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

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81 | That the Senate honors the memory, and celebrates the 78th
82 | birthday, of a great American leader, the Reverend Dr. Martin
83 | Luther King, Jr., whose inspired moral leadership and courage
84 | guided our nation through an immense struggle for civil and
85 | human rights and whose example continues to inspire us in our
86 | efforts to complete that struggle.