

By Senator Thompson

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1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution remembering the outstanding contributions
3 of pioneer leaders and martyrs Harriette Vyda Simms
4 Moore and Harry T. Moore in commemoration of the 50th
5 Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act.
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7 WHEREAS, Harry T. Moore was born on November 18, 1905, in
8 Houston, Florida, the only child of Johnny and Rosalea Alberta
9 Moore, and

10 WHEREAS, in 1919, Harry T. Moore enrolled in the high
11 school program of Florida Memorial College, where he excelled in
12 his studies and earned the nickname "Doc" from his classmates,
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Harry T. Moore graduated from Florida Memorial
15 College at the age of 19 years with a "normal degree" and
16 accepted a teaching job at the only black elementary school in
17 Cocoa, located in Brevard County, and

18 WHEREAS, during his first year in Brevard County, Harry T.
19 Moore met 23-year-old Harriette Vyda Simms, an elementary school
20 teacher and civil rights pioneer who was later blacklisted due
21 her political activities, and within a year they were married,
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Harry T. Moore was promoted to principal of the
24 Titusville Colored School, where he taught ninth grade and
25 supervised a staff of six teachers, and

26 WHEREAS, in 1934, the Moores started the Brevard County
27 Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of
28 Colored People (NAACP), and in 1937, in conjunction with the
29 all-black Florida State Teacher's Association, and backed by

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30 NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall in New York, filed the first
31 lawsuit in the deep South seeking to equalize the salaries of
32 black and white teachers, and

33 WHEREAS, the lawsuit filed by Harry T. Moore spawned other
34 federal lawsuits in Florida that eventually led to equal
35 salaries, and

36 WHEREAS, in 1941, Harry T. Moore organized the Florida
37 State Conference of the NAACP and soon became its unpaid
38 executive secretary, writing letters, circulars, and broadsides
39 that protested unequal salaries, segregated schools, and the
40 disenfranchisement of black voters, and

41 WHEREAS, in 1943, Harry T. Moore launched an investigation
42 into each of the lynchings that had occurred in this state, and

43 WHEREAS, in 1944, Harry T. Moore organized the Progressive
44 Voters' League, which over the next six years registered more
45 than 116,000 black voters with the Florida Democratic Party, and

46 WHEREAS, the success of his efforts is reflected in the
47 fact that the number of voters registered by the Progressive
48 Voters' League represented 31 percent of all eligible black
49 voters in this state, a percentage that was 51 percent higher
50 than in any other southern state, and

51 WHEREAS, on Christmas Day in 1951, Harry T. Moore was
52 killed by a bomb that was placed beneath the Moores' home
53 directly under his bed, and his beloved wife, Harriette, died
54 nine days later as a result of the blast, and

55 WHEREAS, the murders of Harry T. Moore and Harriette Vyda
56 Simms Moore have never been solved, NOW, THEREFORE,

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58 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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60 That the outstanding contributions of American Civil Rights
61 movement pioneers and martyrs Harriette Vyda Simms Moore and
62 Harry T. Moore are recognized and their sacrifices, which helped
63 to usher in the Voting Rights Act in the United States, are
64 respectfully remembered.