

By Senators Joyner and Thompson

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1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing the 87th anniversary of the
3 birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on January 15,
4 2016.

5
6 WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on January 15,
7 1929, in Atlanta, and

8 WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr., attended Morehouse
9 College, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, Crozer
10 Theological Seminary, where he earned a Bachelor of Divinity
11 degree, and Boston University, where he earned a Doctorate of
12 Philosophy, and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was an American
14 Baptist minister who inspired not only African Americans, but
15 all Americans, to pursue their dreams and to engage in
16 nonviolent protests against segregation and other social and
17 economic injustice, and

18 WHEREAS, while Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership of
19 the modern American Civil Rights Movement lasted less than 13
20 years, from December 1955 until April 1968, African Americans
21 achieved dramatic progress in racial equality in America during
22 that time, and

23 WHEREAS, drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith
24 and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther
25 King, Jr., led the nonviolent movement in the late 1950s and
26 1960s to achieve legal equality for African Americans in the
27 United States, and

28 WHEREAS, while others were advocating for freedom by any
29 means necessary, including violence, Dr. Martin Luther King,
30 Jr., used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance,
31 such as protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience,
32 to achieve seemingly impossible goals, and

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33 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., went on to lead
34 similar campaigns against poverty and international conflict,
35 always remaining faithful to his principles that men and women
36 everywhere, regardless of color or creed, are equal members of
37 the human family, and

38 WHEREAS, in 1964, at 35 years of age, Dr. Martin Luther
39 King, Jr., became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace
40 Prize and, in his acceptance speech in Oslo, delivered rousing
41 remarks that included the often quoted statement, "I believe
42 that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final
43 word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is
44 stronger than evil triumphant," and

45 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life ended abruptly
46 and tragically on April 4, 1968, when he was assassinated at the
47 Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, and

48 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream"
49 speech, his Nobel Peace Prize lecture, and his "Letter from
50 Birmingham Jail" are among the most revered orations and
51 writings in the English language, his accomplishments are now
52 taught to American children of all races, and his teachings are
53 studied by scholars and students worldwide, and

54 WHEREAS, on April 8, 1968, just 4 days after Dr. Martin
55 Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, Congressman John Conyers
56 introduced the first legislation providing for a Martin Luther
57 King, Jr., federal holiday, and

58 WHEREAS, in April 1971, petitions gathered by the Southern
59 Christian Leadership Conference bearing 3 million signatures in
60 support of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday were presented to
61 the United States Congress, but the holiday legislation remained

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62 stalled, and

63 WHEREAS, in 1979, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s widow,
64 Coretta Scott King, launched an initiative through the King
65 Center in Atlanta to organize a nationwide citizens' lobby for a
66 national Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, and the new petition
67 was signed by more than 300,000 people before the end of the
68 year, prompting President Jimmy Carter to call on the United
69 States Congress to pass the national Martin Luther King, Jr.
70 Holiday, and

71 WHEREAS, in August 1983, the United States House of
72 Representatives passed the King Holiday Bill, and, on October
73 19, 1983, the companion bill sponsored by Senator Ted Kennedy
74 passed the United States Senate by a vote of 78-22, and

75 WHEREAS, on November 3, 1983, President Ronald Reagan
76 signed the bill establishing the third Monday of each January as
77 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, which was first celebrated in 1986,
78 and

79 WHEREAS, in 2016, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is being
80 celebrated on January 18, just 3 days after the 87th anniversary
81 of his birth, and a grateful nation will remember the humble,
82 heroic, and God-ordained leader who changed a nation and the
83 world, and

84 WHEREAS, in her advocacy for creation of the King Holiday,
85 Coretta Scott King noted, "As a nation chooses its heroes and
86 heroines, a nation interprets its history and shapes its
87 destiny. The commemoration of the life and work of Martin Luther
88 King, Jr., can help America realize its true destiny as the
89 global model for democracy, economic and social justice, and as
90 the first nonviolent society in human history," NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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94 That the Florida Senate encourages all Floridians to
95 remember the extraordinary life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther
96 King, Jr., on January 15, 2016, the 87th anniversary of his
97 birth.