

By Senator Thompson

12-01142-16

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to special observances; creating s.
3 683.333, F.S.; designating the third Monday of
4 February of each year as "Reverend C.K. Steele Day";
5 providing an effective date.

6
7 WHEREAS, Charles Kenzie "C.K." Steele was born in 1914, in
8 Bluefield, West Virginia, and

9 WHEREAS, C.K. Steele grew up and attended secondary schools
10 in Gary, West Virginia, and continued his education at Morehouse
11 College in Atlanta, where he received his bachelor's degree in
12 1938, and

13 WHEREAS, after finishing work toward his bachelor's degree,
14 C.K. Steele completed his religious studies at the
15 Interdenominational Theological Seminary in Atlanta and the
16 Urban Training Center for Christian Mission in Chicago, and

17 WHEREAS, C.K. Steele was hired as the minister of the Hall
18 Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1938, where he
19 met and later married his wife, Lois Marion Brock, and

20 WHEREAS, C.K. Steele also served as a minister at churches
21 in Augusta and Toccoa, Georgia, before moving to Tallahassee in
22 1952 to become the pastor of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church,
23 and

24 WHEREAS, in Tallahassee, C.K. Steele gained a reputation as
25 a civil rights leader through his service as president of the
26 state and local chapters of the National Association for the
27 Advancement of Colored People, president of the Inter-Civic
28 Council, and first vice president of the Southern Christian
29 Leadership Conference, and

30 WHEREAS, C.K. Steele remained steadfast in his commitment
31 to achieving racial equality through his leadership of the
32 boycott to desegregate City of Tallahassee buses, and

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33 WHEREAS, C.K. Steele was actively engaged in numerous other
34 activities to help eliminate racial discrimination, such as
35 freedom rides, voter registration campaigns, the Poor People's
36 Campaign, and Operation Breadbasket, despite threats of
37 violence, incarceration, and harassment, and

38 WHEREAS, C.K. Steele was awarded an honorary Doctor of
39 Humane Letters degree by the Florida State University in 1980,
40 the first honorary degree conferred upon an African American in
41 the history of that institution, as he continued his work in
42 battling racial inequality until his untimely death on August
43 19, 1980, and

44 WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the life of C.K. Steele,
45 and his significant contributions toward seeking racial equality
46 and fairness in this state and nationwide, be recognized and
47 celebrated on "Reverend C.K. Steele Day," NOW, THEREFORE,

48

49 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

50

51 Section 1. Section 683.333, Florida Statutes, is created to
52 read:

53 683.333 Reverend C.K. Steele Day.—The third Monday in
54 February of each year is designated as "Reverend C.K. Steele
55 Day."

56 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.