

**First Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R23-0706.01 Andrew Webster x2044

HJR23-1006

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23-1006

101 **CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE**
102 **REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

1 WHEREAS, The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born
2 in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, graduated from Morehouse
3 College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948, graduated from Crozer
4 Theological Seminary in 1951, and received a Ph.D. from Boston
5 University in 1955; and

6 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's faith, resiliency, and commitment to
7 justice became known worldwide through his speeches, writings, and
8 actions; and

9 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King declared that the moral responsibility
10 to aid the oppressed did not stop at the edge of his street, town, or state

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

1 when he wrote, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about
2 what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice
3 everywhere."; and

4 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King, like thousands of other African
5 Americans, withstood attacks on his home and family, among numerous
6 other threats and setbacks, standing firm in his conviction that although
7 the arc of the moral universe is long, it bends towards justice; and

8 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King embodied civil disobedience. He,
9 along with others in the civil rights movement, created constructive
10 tension by being intentionally nonviolent but direct as well as urgent but
11 strategic in their actions. This tension compelled meaningful negotiation
12 with the white power structure of our country without which true civil
13 rights could never be achieved. The urgency required reflection of the
14 assumptions that progress toward equal rights was inevitable and so
15 assertive activism was unnecessary; confronting the myth that time will
16 inevitably cure all ills. In a letter from Birmingham jail, Rev. Dr. King
17 wrote that "those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation"
18 saying "wait" and asking African Americans to wait for courts or for
19 minds to change on their own was a continued miscarriage of justice. He
20 wrote, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never
21 voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the
22 oppressed."; and

23 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King led the Montgomery bus boycott, a
24 13-month protest beginning in 1955, against the segregated city bus lines;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, The Montgomery bus boycott led to the integration
27 of the Montgomery city bus system and is widely credited as the
28 beginning of the civil rights movement in America; and

29 WHEREAS, In 1957, Rev. Dr. King was elected president of the
30 Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to
31 provide leadership for the burgeoning civil rights movement; and

32 WHEREAS, Between 1957 and 1968, Rev. Dr. King spoke more
33 than 2,500 times, wrote 5 books as well as numerous articles, led protests,
34 helped register African American voters, was arrested more than 20
35 times, was awarded 5 honorary degrees, was named Man of the Year by
36 Time magazine, and became the symbolic leader of the African American

1 community as well as a world figure; and

2 WHEREAS, On August 28, 1963, Rev. Dr. King directed the
3 March on Washington, at which more than 200,000 Americans gathered
4 in the name of equality and civil rights and which culminated in Rev. Dr.
5 King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech; and

6 WHEREAS, The leadership of Rev. Dr. King was instrumental in
7 bringing about landmark legislation, such as the "Civil Rights Act of
8 1964", which prohibited segregation in public accommodations and
9 facilities and banned discrimination based on race, color, or national
10 origin, and the "Voting Rights Act of 1965", which eliminated remaining
11 legal barriers to voting for disenfranchised African American voters; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1964, Rev. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace
13 Prize for his tireless and selfless work in the pursuit of justice for African
14 Americans and other oppressed people in America; and

15 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's 13 years of nonviolent leadership
16 ended abruptly and tragically when, on April 4, 1968, he was assassinated
17 while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis,
18 Tennessee; and

19 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's life and work continue to echo in our
20 lives as we strive to reach the lofty goal he set when he said, "Let us all
21 hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the
22 deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched
23 communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of
24 love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their
25 scintillating beauty."; and

26 WHEREAS, The celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in
27 Colorado was championed for 10 years by Representative Wellington and
28 Wilma Webb in the hope that the acknowledgment of the holiday would
29 demonstrate Colorado's commitment to confronting and ending racial
30 injustices. In 1974, Representative Wellington Webb first introduced a
31 resolution to acknowledge the holiday, and in 1975, introduced a bill to
32 do the same. Although these efforts were initially unsuccessful, the work
33 nevertheless continued. In 1985, Representative Wilma Webb
34 championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April 4th of that
35 same year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into law; and

1 WHEREAS, Colorado's enactment of the holiday and the annual
2 Marade -- a merging of the words "march" and "parade" -- predated the
3 federal holiday designation, and the first celebration in Colorado was on
4 January 20, 1986; and

5 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's birthday is a federal holiday in the
6 United States and a state holiday in the state of Colorado, which is
7 celebrated each year on the third Monday in January; and

8 WHEREAS, On Monday, January 16, 2023, we celebrate the 36th
9 anniversary of Rev. Dr. King's holiday; now, therefore,

10 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
11 *Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*
12 *concurring herein:*

13 That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, hereby
14 encourage appropriate observances, ceremonies, and activities to
15 commemorate the federal and state legal holiday honoring the Rev. Dr.
16 Martin Luther King, Jr., throughout all cities, towns, counties, school
17 districts, and local governments within Colorado.

18 *Be It Further Resolved,* That in light of the rising tide of violence
19 in our state and nation, the legislature commends the Colorado state board
20 of education for their leadership in adding the teaching of Dr. King's
21 legacy and the nonviolent principles to Colorado's seventh grade social
22 studies standards. The legislature also calls upon Colorado public schools
23 to honor the legacy of Dr. King by embracing these new educational
24 standards and actively teaching Dr. King's cause for leadership and
25 nonviolent principles as a response to the forces of hatred, racism, and
26 violence in our society. In this way, Colorado and Colorado educators can
27 lead the way in showing a new generation a path to a better, more
28 prosperous, and more peaceful future for all.

29 *Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
30 to President Joe Biden, Honorable Governor Jared Polis, the Honorable
31 Wilma and Wellington Webb, the Congressional Black Caucus, the
32 National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and the members of
33 Colorado's congressional delegation: Senators Michael Bennet and John
34 Hickenlooper and Representatives Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Lauren
35 Boebert, Ken Buck, Doug Lamborn, Jason Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and
36 Yadira Caraveo.