

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

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R25-0762.01 Jake Drukman x2291

HJR25-1005

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Bacon and English, Armagost, Carter, Joseph, Ricks

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Coleman and Exum,

House Committees

Senate Committees

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 25-1005

101 **CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**
102 **DAY.**

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's life and work continue to echo in our
10 lives as we strive to reach the lofty goal he set when he said, "Let us all

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 hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the
2 deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched
3 communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of
4 love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their
5 scintillating beauty"; and

6 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King declared that the moral responsibility
7 to aid the oppressed did not stop at the edge of his street, town, or state
8 when he wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"; and

9 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King, like thousands of other Americans of
10 African descent, withstood personal attacks on his family and was denied
11 the equal right to vote, own a home, and attain an education, among
12 numerous other threats and setbacks, but stood firm in his conviction that
13 "Although the arc of the moral universe is long ... it bends toward
14 justice"; and

15 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King was a co-founder of the Southern
16 Christian Leadership Conference and embraced civil dissent. In
17 confronting hatred and violence, Rev. Dr. King, along with others in the
18 Civil Rights Movement, created constructive tension by being
19 intentionally nonviolent but direct, urgent but strategic, in their actions.
20 This tension compelled examination of Jim Crow laws and our country's
21 structures and systems that favored white Americans, and without such
22 examination, true civil rights could never be achieved. The urgency
23 required confronting the myths that time will inevitably cure all ills and
24 that progress toward equal rights is inevitable; and

25 WHEREAS, In a letter from the Birmingham jail, Rev. Dr. King
26 wrote that "It is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of
27 segregation to say 'wait'," but asking Americans to wait for courts or for
28 minds to change on their own was a continued miscarriage of justice. He
29 wrote, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never
30 voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the
31 oppressed"; and

32 WHEREAS, Between 1955 and 1968, Rev. Dr. King spoke more
33 than 2,500 times, including at the 1963 March on Washington where he
34 delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech with his inspirational look to the
35 future -- "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in
36 a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the
37 content of their character", wrote five books as well as numerous articles,

1 led 33 integral protests such as the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott,
2 helped register Black voters, was arrested more than 20 times, was
3 awarded five honorary degrees, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964,
4 and was the integral leader for gathering hundreds of thousands of people
5 in the name of equality and civil rights. Thus, he became the symbolic
6 leader of the Black community as well as a world figure; and

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

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

17 WHEREAS, The celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in
18 Colorado was championed for 10 years by Representatives Wellington
19 and Wilma Webb in the hope that the acknowledgment of the holiday
20 would demonstrate Colorado's commitment to confronting and ending
21 racial injustices. In 1974, Representative Wellington Webb first
22 introduced a resolution to acknowledge the holiday and, in 1975,
23 introduced a bill to do the same. In 1985, Representative Wilma Webb
24 championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April 4 of that same
25 year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into law; and

26 WHEREAS, In 1984, Representative Wilma Webb, former
27 Representative Arie Taylor, and Governor Dick Lamm also created the
28 state's Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission. In 1986,
29 the Commission began a week-long series of events including the Marade
30 (a combination of the words "march" and "parade") on "Martin's Day". In
31 2000, the Commission transitioned to being privately run and was
32 renamed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission,
33 which continues the 39th Marade that begins at the Dr. King Memorial
34 statue in Denver's City Park; and

35 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's birthday as a Colorado state holiday
36 predates the federal holiday in the United States and is celebrated each
37 year on the third Monday in January; and

1 WHEREAS, On Monday, January 20, 2025, we celebrate the 41st
2 anniversary of Rev. Dr. King's holiday in Colorado; now, therefore,

3 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth*
4 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:*

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

10 *Be It Further Resolved,* That with the rising tide of violence in our
11 state and nation, the general assembly commends the Colorado state
12 board of education for its leadership in adding the teaching of Rev. Dr.
13 King's legacy and nonviolent principles to Colorado's social studies
14 standards. The general assembly also calls upon the recognition of the
15 60th anniversaries and thus the continued commitment to the ideals of the
16 Federal Civil and Voting Rights Acts to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr.
17 King, including his cause for leadership and nonviolent principles as a
18 response to the forces of racism, discrimination, and violence in our
19 society. In this way, Colorado can lead the way in showing a new
20 generation a path to a better, more prosperous, and more peaceful future
21 for all.

22 *Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
23 to President Joe Biden; Vice President Kamala Harris; Honorable
24 Governor Jared Polis; the Honorable Wilma and Wellington Webb; the
25 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission, Commission
26 commissioners including chairperson Dr. Vern Howard; the
27 Congressional Black Caucus; the National Black Caucus of State
28 Legislators, and the members of Colorado's congressional delegation:
29 Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper and Representatives
30 Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Jeff Hurd, Lauren Boebert, Jeff Crank, Jason
31 Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and Gabe Evans.