



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 25-1005

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Bacon and English, Armagost, Carter, Joseph, Ricks, Barron, Bird, Boesenecker, Bottoms, Bradfield, Bradley, Brooks, Brown, Caldwell, Camacho, Clifford, DeGraaf, Espenosa, Feret, Froelich, Garcia, Garcia Sander, Gilchrist, Gonzalez R., Hamrick, Hartsook, Johnson, Keltie, Lieder, Lindsay, Lindstedt, Lukens, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, Mauro, McCluskie, McCormick, Paschal, Phillips, Pugliese, Richardson, Rutinel, Rydin, Sirota, Smith, Soper, Stewart K., Stewart R., Story, Suckla, Taggart, Titone, Valdez, Velasco, Weinberg, Willford, Winter T., Woodrow, Woog, Zokaie;

also SENATOR(S) Coleman and Exum, Amabile, Ball, Bridges, Bright, Carson, Cutter, Danielson, Daugherty, Frizell, Gonzales J., Hinrichsen, Jodeh, Kipp, Kirkmeyer, Kolker, Liston, Lundeen, Marchman, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Pelton B., Pelton R., Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Simpson, Sullivan, Weissman, Winter F..

CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Between 1955 and 1968, Rev. Dr. King spoke more than 2,500 times, including at the 1963 March on Washington where he delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech with his inspirational look to the future -- "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character", wrote five books as well as numerous articles, led 33 integral protests such as the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, helped register Black voters, was arrested more than 20 times, was awarded five honorary degrees, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and was the integral leader for gathering hundreds of thousands of people in the name of equality and civil rights. Thus, he became the symbolic leader of the Black community as well as a world figure; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Julie McCluskie
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