

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

INTRODUCED

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HJR26-1002

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 26-1002

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, Like thousands of other Americans of African
10 descent, Rev. Dr. King withstood personal attacks on his family and was

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 denied the equal rights to vote, own a home, and attain an education,
2 among numerous other threats and setbacks, but stood firm in his
3 conviction that "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward
4 justice"; and

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

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

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

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

37 WHEREAS, The leadership of Rev. Dr. King was instrumental in

1 bringing about landmark federal legislation, such as the "Civil Rights Act
2 of 1964", which prohibited segregation in public accommodations and
3 facilities and banned discrimination based on race, color, or national
4 origin, and the "Voting Rights Act of 1965", which eliminated the
5 remaining legal barriers to voting faced by disenfranchised Black voters;
6 and

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

10 WHEREAS, Just four days after Rev. Dr. King's assassination, on
11 April 8, 1968, Congressman John Conyers introduced the first bill to
12 recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a federal holiday. Fifteen years
13 later, Coretta Scott King and Stevie Wonder delivered a petition with over
14 six million signatures in favor of the holiday to Congress; and

15 WHEREAS, When President Ronald Reagan signed H.R. 3706
16 into law on November 2, 1983, and designated the third Monday of
17 January a federal holiday, he stated "...traces of bigotry still mar America.
18 So, each year on Martin Luther King Day, let us not only recall Dr. King,
19 but rededicate ourselves to the Commandments he believed in and sought
20 to live every day: Thou shall love thy God with all thy heart, and thou
21 shall love thy neighbor as thyself. And I just have to believe that all of us
22 -- if all of us, young and old, Republicans and Democrats, do all we can
23 to live up to those Commandments, then we will see the day when Dr.
24 King's dream comes true, and in his words, 'All of God's children will be
25 able to sing with new meaning, "...land where my fathers died, land of the
26 pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring"'"; and

27 WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, marked the first official federal
28 Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, thereby ensuring observances such
29 as closing nonessential offices, allowing federal employees paid time off,
30 and offering free access to federal parks for all American communities;
31 and

32 WHEREAS, In passing the "King Holiday and Service Act of
33 1994", Congress, for the first time, made a federal holiday a "National
34 Day of Service"; in doing so, they honored the words Rev. Dr. King
35 spoke: "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve ... You
36 only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love, and you can be
37 that servant". Known as "a day on, not a day off", Americans are

1 encouraged to honor Rev. Dr. King's legacy on the federal holiday by
2 emphasizing community togetherness and volunteerism through service
3 projects like tutoring, cleaning up a local park or road, and helping
4 communities; and

5 WHEREAS, The celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in
6 Colorado was championed for 10 years by Representatives Wellington
7 and Wilma Webb in the hope that the acknowledgment of the holiday in
8 state legislation would demonstrate Colorado's commitment to
9 confronting and ending racial injustices. In 1984, Representative Wilma
10 Webb championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April 4 of
11 that same year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into law,
12 and by 2000, all 50 states officially observed the holiday at the state level;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, In 1985, Representative Wilma Webb, former
15 Representative Arie Taylor, and Governor Dick Lamm also created the
16 state's Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission. In 1986,
17 the Commission began a week-long series of events, including the
18 Marade (a combination of the words "march" and "parade") on "Martin's
19 Day". In 2000, the Commission transitioned to being privately run and
20 was renamed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday
21 Commission, which in 2026 will continue the 40th Marade that begins at
22 the Dr. King Memorial statue in Denver's City Park; now, therefore,

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

25 (1) That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly,
26 hereby:

- 27 ● Encourage observances, ceremonies, and activities to
28 commemorate the federal and state legal holiday honoring
29 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. throughout all cities,
30 towns, counties, school districts, local governments, and
31 federal lands within Colorado;
- 32 ● Discourage the interruption of celebrations, service
33 projects, and access to America's splendor through its
34 national parks, especially for people of African descent, in
35 the honoring of Rev. Dr. King's legacy; and
- 36 ● Emphasize community togetherness and service; and

1 (2) That with the rising tide of violence in our state and nation, the
2 Colorado General Assembly commends adding the teaching of Rev. Dr.
3 King's legacy and nonviolent principles to Colorado's social studies
4 standards. The Colorado General Assembly also calls for the annual
5 recognition of the continued commitment to the ideals of the federal
6 "Civil Rights Act of 1964" and "Voting Rights Act of 1965" to honor the
7 legacy of Rev. Dr. King, including his cause for leadership and
8 nonviolent principles as a response to the forces of racism, discrimination,
9 and violence in our society. In this way, Colorado can lead the way in
10 showing a path to a better, more prosperous, and more peaceful future for
11 all.

12 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
13 to President Donald Trump; Vice President J.D. Vance; the Honorable
14 Governor Jared Polis; the Honorable Wilma and Wellington Webb; the
15 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission and
16 Commissioners, including chairperson Dr. Vern Howard; the
17 Congressional Black Caucus; the National Black Caucus of State
18 Legislators; and the members of Colorado's congressional delegation:
19 Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper and Representatives
20 Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Jeff Hurd, Lauren Boebert, Jeff Crank, Jason
21 Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and Gabe Evans.