



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23-1006

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) English and Epps, Bacon, Herod, Jodeh, Joseph, Ricks, Amabile, Bird, Boesenecker, Daugherty, deGruy Kennedy, Dickson, Duran, Froelich, Garcia, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Hamrick, Kipp, Lieder, Lindsay, Lindstedt, Lukens, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, McCormick, McLachlan, Michaelson Jenet, Ortiz, Parenti, Sharbini, Sirota, Snyder, Story, Titone, Valdez, Velasco, Vigil, Weissman, Woodrow, Young, McCluskie; also SENATOR(S) Coleman and Exum, Buckner, Fields, Bridges, Cutter, Ginal, Gonzales, Hansen, Hinrichsen, Jaquez Lewis, Lundeen, Marchman, Moreno, Mullica, Priola, Roberts, Rodriguez, Sullivan, Winter F., Zenzinger, Fenberg.

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

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 declared that the moral responsibility to aid the oppressed did not stop at the edge of his street, town, or state when he wrote, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about

what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."; and

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

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King embodied civil disobedience. He, along with others in the civil rights movement, created constructive tension by being intentionally nonviolent but direct as well as urgent but strategic in their actions. This tension compelled meaningful negotiation with the white power structure of our country without which true civil rights could never be achieved. The urgency required reflection of the assumptions that progress toward equal rights was inevitable and so assertive activism was unnecessary; confronting the myth that time will inevitably cure all ills. In a letter from Birmingham jail, Rev. Dr. King wrote that "those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation" saying "wait" and asking African 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, Rev. Dr. King led the Montgomery bus boycott, a 13-month protest beginning in 1955, against the segregated city bus lines; and

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

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

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

community as well as a world figure; and

WHEREAS, On August 28, 1963, Rev. Dr. King directed the March on Washington, at which more than 200,000 Americans gathered in the name of equality and civil rights and which culminated in Rev. Dr. King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech; 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 remaining legal barriers to voting for disenfranchised African American voters; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Rev. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his tireless and selfless work in the pursuit of justice for African Americans and other oppressed people in America; 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, 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, 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. Although these efforts were initially unsuccessful, the work nevertheless continued. In 1985, Representative Wilma Webb championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April

4th of that same year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into law; and

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

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

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

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fourth 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 in light of the rising tide of violence in our state and nation, the legislature commends the Colorado state board of education for their leadership in adding the teaching of Dr. King's legacy and the nonviolent principles to Colorado's seventh grade social studies standards. The legislature also calls upon Colorado public schools to honor the legacy of Dr. King by embracing these new educational standards and actively teaching Dr. King's cause for leadership and nonviolent principles as a response to the forces of hatred, racism, and violence in our society. In this way, Colorado and Colorado educators 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, Honorable Governor Jared Polis, the Honorable Wilma and Wellington Webb, 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, Lauren Boebert, Ken Buck, Doug Lamborn, Jason Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and Yadira Caraveo.

Julie McCluskie
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
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