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LRB102 26252 MST 36120 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. walked into the heart of Jim Crow demanding change from those intransigents in their hatred; his courage was unquestioned, his method of nonviolence was risky, and his style was unapologetic; and

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WHEREAS, At 34 years of age, Dr. King received international recognition with the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize; and

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WHEREAS, The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) immorally recorded the life and conversations of Dr. King; and

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WHEREAS, The FBI began monitoring Dr. King in December 1955 during his involvement with the Montgomery Bus Boycott and engaged in covert operations against him throughout the 1960s; and

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WHEREAS, For the last four and one-half years of his life, from November 1963 until his death in April 1968, Dr. King lived without any semblance of privacy; his hotel rooms were bugged, his phones tapped, and his office and inner circle infiltrated by informants; and

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1           WHEREAS, On November 21, 1964, the FBI anonymously sent  
2 Dr. King a letter encouraging him to commit suicide to avoid  
3 public embarrassment; and

4           WHEREAS, According to a U.S. Senate Committee convened in  
5 the 1970s to investigate the FBI's domestic intelligence  
6 operations, when Dr. King condemned the Vietnam War in a  
7 speech at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, the FBI  
8 interpreted this position as proof he "has been influenced by  
9 Communist advisors" and increased their covert operations  
10 against him; and

11           WHEREAS, In August 1967, the FBI created a  
12 counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO, which targeted Dr.  
13 King, the Black Panther Party, and other civil rights leaders;  
14 and

15           WHEREAS, The FBI's surveillance tapes and the transcripts  
16 of them remain under seal until 2027; and

17           WHEREAS, Dr. King is critical to memorializing the Black  
18 experience in America; his mission and the challenges he  
19 unfortunately confronted remain timeless, and no one has the  
20 right to feed on his legacy; therefore, be it

21           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge Governor  
2 Pritzker to express written support for the destruction of the  
3 National Archives and Record Administration's immorally  
4 obtained surveillance tapes on Dr. Martin Luther King; and be  
5 it further

6 RESOLVED, That we urge Governor Pritzker to work with the  
7 Illinois General Assembly to pass legislation that will  
8 prevent similar abuses of power from being perpetrated for  
9 immoral and defamatory reasons; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
11 delivered to Governor Pritzker, Lt. Governor Stratton,  
12 Governor Pritzker's Office of Equity, and the Illinois  
13 Attorney General.