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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, In the 1960 presidential election campaign John F. Kennedy argued for a new Civil Rights Act; after the election it was discovered that over 70% of the African-American vote went to President Kennedy, however, during the first two years of his presidency, President Kennedy failed to put forward his promised legislation; and

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WHEREAS, The Civil Rights bill was brought before Congress in 1963, and in a speech on television on June 11, 1963, President Kennedy said "The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the nation in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is seven years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much."; and

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WHEREAS, President Kennedy's Civil Rights bill was still being debated by Congress when he was assassinated in November of 1963; the new president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, who had a poor record on civil rights issues, took up the cause; and

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WHEREAS, On February 10, 1964, the House of Representatives passed the measure by a lopsided 290 to 130 vote, but everyone knew that the real battle would be in the Senate, whose rules had allowed southerners in the past to mount filibusters that had effectively killed nearly all civil rights legislation; and

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WHEREAS, President Johnson pulled every string he knew and had the civil rights leaders mount a massive lobbying campaign, including inundating the Capitol with religious leaders of all faiths and colors; the strategy paid off, and in June the

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1 Senate voted to close debate; a few weeks later, the U.S.
2 Senate passed the most important piece of civil rights
3 legislation in the nation's history by a total of 73 votes to
4 27, and on July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed it into law;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The 1964 Civil Rights Act made racial
7 discrimination in public places, such as theaters,
8 restaurants, and hotels, illegal; it also required employers to
9 provide equal employment opportunities; projects involving
10 federal funds could now be cut off if there was evidence of
11 discrimination based on color, race, or national origin; and

12 WHEREAS, The Civil Rights Act also attempted to deal with
13 the problem of African Americans being denied the vote in the
14 Deep South; the legislation stated that uniform standards must
15 prevail for establishing the right to vote; schooling to sixth
16 grade constituted legal proof of literacy and the Attorney
17 General was given power to initiate legal action in any area
18 where he found a pattern of resistance to the law; therefore,
19 be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
21 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
22 remember and commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the
23 nation's most important civil rights legislation, The Civil
24 Rights Act of 1964.