



SJ0102

LRB095 21580 KXB 51514 r

1

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois General Assembly are pleased to honor the life and legacy of America's greatest champion of racial justice and equality, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

3

4

5

6

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia; after attending Morehouse College in Atlanta, Dr. King went on to study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania and Boston University, where he deepened his understanding of theological scholarship and explored Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent strategy for social change; and

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. married Coretta Scott in 1953; the following year, he accepted the pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama; he received his Ph.D. in systematic theology in 1955; and

14

15

16

17

WHEREAS, On December 5, 1955, after civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to comply with Montgomery, Alabama's segregation policy on buses, African-American residents launched a bus boycott; the group elected Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. president of the newly-formed Montgomery Improvement Association; the ensuing boycott continued throughout 1956,

18

19

20

21

22

1 with Dr. King gaining national prominence for his role in the
2 campaign; in December of 1956, the United States Supreme Court
3 declared Alabama's segregation laws unconstitutional and
4 Montgomery buses were desegregated, landing Dr. King his first
5 major civil rights victory; and

6 WHEREAS, Building upon the success in Montgomery, Dr.
7 Martin Luther King Jr. and other southern black ministers
8 founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in
9 1957; in 1959, Dr. King toured India and further developed his
10 understanding of Gandhian nonviolent strategies; he resigned
11 from Dexter later that year, returning to Atlanta to become
12 co-pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church with his father; and

13 WHEREAS, In the spring of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
14 and SCLC led mass demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, where
15 local white police officials were known for their violent
16 opposition to integration; clashes between unarmed black
17 demonstrators and police armed with dogs and fire hoses
18 generated newspaper headlines throughout the world; President
19 John F. Kennedy responded to the Birmingham protests by
20 submitting broad civil rights legislation to Congress, which
21 led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

22 WHEREAS, Further civil rights mass demonstrations
23 culminated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on

1 August 28, 1963, in which more than 250,000 protesters gathered
2 in Washington, D.C.; on that day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
3 delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of
4 the Lincoln Memorial; his renown continued to grow as he became
5 Time Magazine's Man of the Year in 1963 and the recipient of
6 the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964; and

7 WHEREAS, Undeterred by rival civil rights factions and
8 resistance from national political leaders, Dr. Martin Luther
9 King Jr. continued his march for freedom with his public
10 criticism of U.S. intervention in the Vietnam War, which led to
11 strained relations with President Lyndon Johnson's
12 administration; in late 1967, Dr. King initiated a Poor
13 People's Campaign designed to confront economic problems that
14 had not been addressed by earlier civil rights reforms; the
15 following year, while supporting striking sanitation workers
16 in Memphis, Tennessee, he delivered his final address, "I've
17 Been to the Mountaintop" ; and

18 WHEREAS, On April 4, 1968, the day after delivering his
19 final speech, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and killed as
20 he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis,
21 Tennessee; this tragic event marked the end of the life of this
22 great leader, yet did not destroy the movement he helped
23 create; and

1 WHEREAS, The intense effort and incredible sacrifices that
2 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave in order to secure the basic
3 freedoms of all men and women must be honored in the greatest
4 fashion; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
7 CONCURRING HEREIN, that we designate Route 20 within the Elgin
8 city limits as the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Highway
9 in honor of this visionary leader; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation
11 is requested to erect at suitable locations, consistent with
12 State and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs
13 giving notice of the designation of the Dr. Martin Luther King
14 Jr. Memorial Highway; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
16 presented to the Elgin City Council, the Kane County Board, the
17 Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the
18 family of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a symbol of our esteem
19 and respect.