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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, In March of 1965, a series of marches took place from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama as part of the Voting Rights Movement that had began a few years prior; numerous African-American citizens made the 54-mile walk from Selma to the Alabama state capitol to demonstrate their desire to exercise their constitutional right to vote, in defiance of segregationist repression; and

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WHEREAS, The first march took place on March 7, 1965; it was interrupted when the 600 marchers were attacked at the Edmund Pettus Bridge after leaving Selma, becoming known as "Bloody Sunday"; and

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WHEREAS, The second march, "Turnaround Tuesday", took place on March 9, 1965; the march was to be "ceremonial" with participants halting when ordered to do so, in compliance with a legal injunction against marching any further; and

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WHEREAS, On March 21, 1965, close to 8,000 people began the third march, and, on March 25, 25,000 people arrived at the steps of the Alabama State Capitol Building to witness Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his "How Long, Not Long" speech; and

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1 WHEREAS, The marches received national and international
2 coverage and had a powerful effect on Washington, D.C. and the
3 rest of the country, and, on March 15, 1965, President Lyndon
4 Johnson presented to Congress the bill that would become the
5 Voting Rights Act; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1960, there were 53,336 African-American
7 voters in the State of Alabama, and, 3 decades later, there
8 were 537,285; in 1996, the 54-mile Selma-to-Montgomery
9 National Historic Trail was established, preserved by the
10 National Park Service; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
12 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
13 recognize the Selma to Montgomery marches that took place in
14 March of 1965 and the continuing struggle to ensure voting
15 rights are allowed to be exercised by all.