



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 26-1002

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Bacon and Carter, English, Jackson, Joseph, Ricks, Barron, Boesenecker, Bottoms, Bradfield, Brooks, Brown, Caldwell, Camacho, Clifford, DeGraaf, Duran, Espenosa, Feret, Flanell, Froelich, Garcia, Garcia Sander, Gilchrist, Goldstein, Gonzalez R., Hamrick, Hartsook, Johnson, Keltie, Lieder, Lindsay, Lukens, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, McCormick, Nguyen, Paschal, Phillips, Richardson, Rutinel, Rydin, Slaugh, Smith, Soper, Stewart K., Stewart R., Story, Suckla, Taggart, Titone, Valdez, Velasco, Willford, Winter T., Zokaie, McCluskie;
 also SENATOR(S) Coleman and Exum, Amabile, Baisley, Ball, Bright, Carson, Cutter, Danielson, Daugherty, Frizell, Gonzales J., Hinrichsen, Jodeh, Kipp, Kirkmeyer, Lindstedt, Liston, Marchman, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Pelton B., Pelton R., Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Simpson, Snyder, Sullivan, Wallace, Weissman, Zamora Wilson.

CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY.

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, Like thousands of other Americans of African descent, Rev. Dr. King withstood personal attacks on his family and was denied the equal rights to vote, own a home, and attain an education, among numerous other threats and setbacks, but stood firm in his conviction that "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice"; 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, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"; and

WHEREAS, A co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Rev. Dr. King embraced civil dissent. In confronting hatred and violence, he and others in the Civil Rights Movement created constructive tension by being intentionally nonviolent but direct, urgent but strategic, in their actions. This tension compelled examination of Jim Crow laws and our country's structures and systems that favored white Americans, and without such examination, true civil rights could never be achieved. The urgency required confronting the myths that time will inevitably cure all ills and that progress toward equal rights is inevitable; and

WHEREAS, In a letter from the Birmingham jail, Rev. Dr. King wrote that "It is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say 'wait'", but asking 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, Between 1955 and 1968, Rev. Dr. King spoke more than 2,500 times, including at the 1963 March on Washington where he delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech with his inspirational look to the future -- "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character"; wrote five books as well as numerous articles; led 33 integral protests, such as the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott; helped register Black voters; was arrested more than 20 times; was awarded five honorary degrees; received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964; and was the integral leader for gathering hundreds of thousands of people in the name of equality and civil rights. Thus, he became the symbolic leader of the Black community as well as a world figure; and

WHEREAS, The leadership of Rev. Dr. King was instrumental in bringing about landmark federal 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 the remaining legal barriers to voting faced by disenfranchised Black voters; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's 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, Just four days after Rev. Dr. King's assassination, on April 8, 1968, Congressman John Conyers introduced the first bill to recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a federal holiday. Fifteen years later, Coretta Scott King and Stevie Wonder delivered a petition with over six million signatures in favor of the holiday to Congress; and

WHEREAS, When President Ronald Reagan signed H.R. 3706 into law on November 2, 1983, and designated the third Monday of January a federal holiday, he stated "...traces of bigotry still mar America. So, each year on Martin Luther King Day, let us not only recall Dr. King, but rededicate ourselves to the Commandments he believed in and sought to live every day: Thou shall love thy God with all thy heart, and thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. And I just have to believe that all of us -- if all of us, young and old, Republicans and Democrats, do all we can to live up to those Commandments, then we will see the day when Dr. King's dream comes true, and in his words, 'All of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "...land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring""; and

WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, marked the first official federal Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, thereby ensuring observances such as closing nonessential offices, allowing federal employees paid time off, and offering free access to federal parks for all American communities; and

WHEREAS, In passing the "King Holiday and Service Act of 1994", Congress, for the first time, made a federal holiday a "National Day of Service"; in doing so, they honored the words Rev. Dr. King spoke: "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve ... You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love, and you can be that servant". Known as "a day on, not a day off", Americans are encouraged to honor Rev. Dr. King's legacy on the federal holiday by emphasizing community togetherness and volunteerism through service projects like tutoring, cleaning up a local park or road, and helping communities; 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 in state legislation would demonstrate Colorado's commitment to confronting and ending racial injustices. In 1984, Representative Wilma Webb championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April 4 of that same year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into law, and by 2000, all 50 states officially observed the holiday at the state level; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, Representative Wilma Webb, former Representative Arie Taylor, and Governor Dick Lamm also created the state's Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission. In 1986, the Commission began a week-long series of events, including the Marade (a combination of the words "march" and "parade") on "Martin's Day". In 2000, the Commission transitioned to being privately run and was renamed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission, which in 2026 will continue the 40th Marade that begins at the Dr. King Memorial statue in Denver's City Park; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:

(1) That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, hereby:

- Encourage observances, ceremonies, and activities to commemorate the federal and state legal holiday honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. throughout all cities, towns, counties, school districts, local governments, and federal lands within Colorado;
- Discourage the interruption of celebrations, service projects, and access to America's splendor through its national parks, especially for people of African descent, in the honoring of Rev. Dr. King's legacy; and
- Emphasize community togetherness and service; and

(2) That with the rising tide of violence in our state and nation, the Colorado General Assembly commends adding the teaching of Rev. Dr. King's legacy and nonviolent principles to Colorado's social studies standards. The Colorado General Assembly also calls for the annual recognition of the continued commitment to the ideals of the federal "Civil Rights Act of 1964" and "Voting Rights Act of 1965" to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. King, including his cause for leadership and nonviolent principles as a response to the forces of racism, discrimination, and violence in our society. In this way, Colorado can lead the way in showing 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 Donald Trump; Vice President J.D. Vance; the Honorable Governor Jared Polis; the Honorable Wilma and Wellington Webb; the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission and Commissioners, including chairperson Dr. Vern Howard; 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, Jeff Hurd, Lauren Boebert, Jeff Crank, Jason Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and Gabe Evans.

Julie McCluskie
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