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ACR-27 Bayard Rustin. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 27

CHAPTER 21

Relative to Bayard Rustin.

[Filed with Secretary of State March 19, 2019.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 27, Carrillo. Bayard Rustin.

This measure, in observance of Black History Month, would honor the legacy of Bayard Rustin, who stood at the confluence of the greatest struggles for civil, legal, and human rights by African Americans, as well as the LGBTQ community, and whose focus on civil and economic rights and belief in peace and the dignity of all people remain as relevant today as ever.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, In celebration of Black History Month, an annual observance that recognizes the achievements of African Americans and pays tribute to the generations of African Americans who faced significant adversity to achieve full citizenship in American society, it is appropriate to honor the legacy of the late Bayard Rustin, an unsung hero of the civil rights movement, for his extraordinary contributions to the advancement of equal rights for all individuals and his unselfish acts of community service; and

WHEREAS, A staunch and dedicated American civil rights activist of unquestioned integrity, Bayard Rustin devoted his life to promoting and defending peace, racial equality, economic justice, and human rights, and distinguished himself as a close advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as a prominent LGBTQ activist; and

WHEREAS, Born on March 17, 1912, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Bayard Rustin became a foe of racial segregation and a lifelong believer in pacifist agitation, principles he diligently upheld while working for the Fellowship of Reconciliation from 1941 to 1953 and organizing the New York branch of the Congress of Racial Equality in 1941; and

WHEREAS, Deeply devoted to changing the world for the better by ending segregation in America, Bayard Rustin embarked on the Journey of Reconciliation in 1947, an early version of the Freedom Riders, which attempted to test the Supreme Court's ruling regarding segregation of buses that crossed state lines, and in the 1950's, he became a close advisor to civil rights leader Dr. King and chief organizer of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and

WHEREAS, A master strategist and tireless activist, Bayard Rustin played a critical role in bringing nonviolent protest techniques to the American civil rights movement, having introduced Dr. King to Mahatma Gandhi's teachings while writing publicity materials and organizing carpools, helping mold Dr. King into an international symbol of peace and nonviolence, and as a result of his commitment, he was entrusted to serve as the chief organizer of the March on Washington in August 1963, a massive demonstration to rally support for civil rights legislation pending in Congress; and

WHEREAS, Having traveled to Alabama to meet with Dr. King, Bayard Rustin worked to expand the March on Washington's focus to "jobs and freedom," established its 10 goals, and when the day came, he read the demands of the March, which has been deemed the greatest demonstration for freedom in American history, and these acts stand as a concentrated expression of his decades of commitment to vociferous, but always nonviolent, protest; and

WHEREAS, Bayard Rustin went on to direct a one-day student boycott of New York City's public schools in 1964 in protest against racial imbalances and served as President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, a civil rights organization in New York City, from 1966 to 1979, before his death on August 24, 1987; and

WHEREAS, Bayard Rustin's incredible legacy was acknowledged with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013; and

WHEREAS, The Bayard Rustin Commemorative Stamp campaign, which is co-sponsored by the National Black Justice Coalition, the National LGBT Museum, and the GLBT Historic Task Force, is advocating for the adoption of the Bayard Rustin Commemorative Stamp in posthumous recognition of his role in the civil rights movement, an honor that is merited and has been long-awaited; now therefore be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That, in observance of Black History Month the Legislature honors the legacy of Bayard Rustin, who stood at the confluence of the greatest struggles for civil, legal, and human rights by African Americans, as well as the LGBTQ community, and whose focus on civil and economic rights and belief in peace and the dignity of all people remain as relevant today as ever; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.