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ACR-1 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 1

CHAPTER 2

Relative to Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 14, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 1, Wilson. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

This measure would honor the late civil rights pioneer Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, On Sunday, January 15, 2023, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been 94 years of age; and

WHEREAS, On Monday, January 16, 2023, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day will be celebrated in remembrance of the late civil rights pioneer and Baptist minister Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, On April 8, 1968, just four days after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.) introduced the first bill to establish January 15th, Dr. King's birthday, as a federal holiday; and

WHEREAS, On April 10, 1970, California became the first state to pass legislation making Dr. King's birthday a school holiday and, subsequently, a statewide holiday; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, another 11 years went by for Conyers' motion for the federal holiday to come up for a vote on the House of Representatives' floor; and

WHEREAS, In November 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the bill creating a United States federal holiday in honor of Dr. King after years of campaigning by activists, recording artist Stevie Wonder, members of the United States Congress, and Dr. King's wife, the late Coretta Scott King; and

WHEREAS, The first federal holiday honoring Dr. King was celebrated in 1986; and

WHEREAS, By 1986, 17 states had already adopted the federal holiday. But strong resistance by several states to observe this day as a state holiday continued for years; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was finally observed in all states in some form. However, several states have extended names for the holiday; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, for dynamic leadership of the Civil Rights Movement and steadfast commitment to achieving racial justice through nonviolent action. Dr. King pledged the prize money to the movement's continued development. At the age of 35, Dr. King became the youngest man, and only the second African American, to receive the prestigious award; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped change public policy from segregation to integration, resulting in the repeal of the post-Reconstruction era state laws mandating racial segregation in the South, known as the "Jim Crow Laws," thereby leading to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964, and has been effective for nearly 59 years, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other antidiscrimination laws aimed at ending economic, legal, and social segregation in America; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King, in the last months of life, began organizing a Poor People's Campaign to, among other things, assemble "a multiracial army of the poor that would descend on Washington—engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience at the Capitol, if need be—until Congress enacted a poor people's bill of rights," and 2018 marked the 50th anniversary of this campaign; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped change public policy from legal and socially acceptable discrimination and segregation to an open and accessible policy of racial integration leading to equal participation in and access to primary and higher education, housing, employment, transportation, federal, state, and local governmental elections, and other aspects of public policy relating to human rights; and

WHEREAS, The life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was devoted to fighting segregation and injustice by nonviolent means and is an outstanding example of courageous leadership in the face of unrelenting violence and harassment by individuals and governmental institutions; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Dr. King's wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, officially founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, dedicated to being a "living memorial" aimed at continuing Dr. King's work on important social ills around the world; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King's assassination nearly 55 years ago changed America and we continue to work toward racial equality, economic justice, and peace; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a source of inspiration for all Americans; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the benefits of the collaborative work by many organizations that promote, facilitate, and carry out needed service projects nationwide; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages its members and colleagues to urge their constituents to participate in community service projects; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature acknowledges that, by serving one's country, one's community, and one's neighbor, our nation makes progress in civility, equality, and unity consistent with the values and life's work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature honors the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and commemorates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; and be it further

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