

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

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HJR24-1004

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 24-1004

101 **CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE**
102 **REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

1 WHEREAS, The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born
2 in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, graduated from Morehouse
3 College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948, graduated from Crozer
4 Theological Seminary in 1951, and received a Ph.D. from Boston
5 University in 1955; and

6 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's faith, resiliency, and commitment to
7 justice became known worldwide through his speeches, writings, and
8 actions; and

9 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King declared that the moral responsibility
10 to aid the oppressed did not stop at the edge of his street, town, or state

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

1 when he wrote, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about
2 what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice
3 everywhere"; and

4 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King, like thousands of other African
5 Americans, withstood attacks on his home and family, among numerous
6 other threats and setbacks, but stood firm in his conviction that "although
7 the arc of the moral universe is long ... it bends toward justice"; and

8 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King embodied civil disobedience. In
9 confronting hatred and violence, Rev. Dr. King, along with others in the
10 civil rights movement, created constructive tension by being intentionally
11 nonviolent but direct, urgent but strategic, in their actions. This tension
12 compelled examination of Jim Crow laws and our country's structures and
13 systems that favored White Americans in access to safety, education,
14 jobs, homes, and voting -- without which true civil rights could never be
15 achieved. The urgency required confronting the myths that time will
16 inevitably cure all ills and that progress toward equal rights is inevitable;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, In a letter from the Birmingham jail, Rev. Dr. King
19 wrote that "it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of
20 segregation to say 'wait'," but asking African Americans to wait for courts
21 or for minds to change on their own was a continued miscarriage of
22 justice. He wrote, "We know through painful experience that freedom is
23 never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the
24 oppressed"; and

25 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King led the Montgomery bus boycott, a
26 13-month protest beginning in 1955, against the segregated city bus lines;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, The Montgomery bus boycott led to the integration
29 of the Montgomery city bus system and is widely credited as the
30 beginning of the civil rights movement in America; and

31 WHEREAS, In 1957, Rev. Dr. King was elected president of the
32 Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to
33 provide leadership for the burgeoning civil rights movement; and

34 WHEREAS, Between 1957 and 1968, Rev. Dr. King spoke more
35 than 2,500 times, wrote five books as well as numerous articles, led

1 protests, helped register African American voters, was arrested more than
2 20 times, was awarded five honorary degrees, was named Man of the
3 Year by Time magazine, and became the symbolic leader of the African
4 American community as well as a world figure; and

5 WHEREAS, On August 28, 1963, Rev. Dr. King directed the
6 March on Washington, at which more than 200,000 Americans gathered
7 in the name of equality and civil rights and which culminated in Rev. Dr.
8 King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech; and

9 WHEREAS, The leadership of Rev. Dr. King was instrumental in
10 bringing about landmark legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964,
11 which prohibited segregation in public accommodations and facilities and
12 banned discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, and the
13 Voting Rights Act of 1965, which eliminated for disenfranchised African
14 American voters the remaining legal barriers to voting; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1964, Rev. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace
16 Prize for his tireless and selfless work in the pursuit of justice for African
17 Americans and other oppressed people in America; and

18 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's 13 years of nonviolent leadership
19 ended abruptly and tragically when, on April 4, 1968, he was assassinated
20 while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis,
21 Tennessee; and

22 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's life and work continue to echo in our
23 lives as we strive to reach the lofty goal he set when he said, "Let us all
24 hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the
25 deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched
26 communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of
27 love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their
28 scintillating beauty"; and

29 WHEREAS, The celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in
30 Colorado was championed for 10 years by Representatives Wellington
31 and Wilma Webb in the hope that the acknowledgment of the holiday
32 would demonstrate Colorado's commitment to confronting and ending
33 racial injustices. In 1974, Representative Wellington Webb first
34 introduced a resolution to acknowledge the holiday and, in 1975,
35 introduced a bill to do the same. Although these efforts were initially
36 unsuccessful, the work nevertheless continued. In 1985, Representative

1 Wilma Webb championed the cause as the primary bill sponsor. On April
2 4 of that same year, Colorado Governor Dick Lamm signed the bill into
3 law; and

4 WHEREAS, Colorado's enactment of the holiday and the annual
5 Marade -- a merging of the words "march" and "parade" -- predated the
6 federal holiday designation, and the first celebration in Colorado was on
7 January 20, 1986; and

8 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. King's birthday is a federal holiday in the
9 United States and a state holiday in the state of Colorado, and is
10 celebrated each year on the third Monday in January; and

11 WHEREAS, On Monday, January 15, 2024, we celebrate the
12 thirty-eighth anniversary of Rev. Dr. King's holiday; now, therefore,

13 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
14 *Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*
15 *concurring herein:*

16 That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, hereby
17 encourage appropriate observances, ceremonies, and activities to
18 commemorate the federal and state legal holiday honoring the Rev. Dr.
19 Martin Luther King, Jr., throughout all cities, towns, counties, school
20 districts, and local governments within Colorado.

21 *Be It Further Resolved,* That the legislature commends the
22 continued teaching of Rev. Dr. King's legacy and nonviolent principles
23 that have been recently added to Colorado's seventh-grade social studies
24 standards. The legislature also calls upon Colorado public schools to
25 continue to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. King by actively teaching Rev.
26 Dr. King's cause for leadership and nonviolent principles as a response to
27 the forces of hatred, racism, and violence in our society. In this way,
28 Colorado and Colorado educators can lead the way in showing a new
29 generation a path to a better, more prosperous, and more peaceful future
30 for all.

31 *Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
32 to President Joe Biden, Honorable Governor Jared Polis, the Honorable
33 Wilma and Wellington Webb, the Congressional Black Caucus, the
34 National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and the members of
35 Colorado's congressional delegation: Senators Michael Bennet and John

1 Hickenlooper and Representatives Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Lauren
2 Boebert, Ken Buck, Doug Lamborn, Jason Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and
3 Yadira Caraveo.