

House Resolution 1561

By: Representatives Martin of the 49th, Hatchett of the 155th, Burns of the 159th, and Anulewicz of the 42nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing April 8, 2024, as Henry Louis Aaron Day; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, on April 8, 1974, Henry Louis Aaron achieved the unimaginable by hitting his
3 715th career home run, establishing himself as one of the greatest to ever play the game of
4 baseball. Henry Aaron, affectionately known as Hank to his millions of adoring fans, set the
5 standard for excellence on and off the baseball field; and

6 WHEREAS, Hank was born in Mobile, Alabama, on February 5, 1934, one of eight children
7 to Herbert Sr. and Estella Aaron. Despite growing up in the segregated South amid Jim
8 Crow, Hank showed grit and determination, slugging bottle caps with a broomstick to
9 develop his skills as a baseball player; and

10 WHEREAS, Hank boarded a train in 1951 to play for the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro
11 American League before signing a contract to play with the Braves organization. He was
12 assigned to the Eau Claire Bears, where he won the league's Rookie of the Year. He then
13 joined the Jacksonville Braves, where he overcame tremendous hostility as he integrated the
14 South Atlantic League, led the team to a championship, and won the Sally League MVP; and

15 WHEREAS, Hank joined the big league club in 1954 and immediately became a force in the
16 game, playing with an indelible mix of tenacity, humility, and grace. Hank had a career
17 unmatched in the history of baseball, hitting 30 or more home runs 15 times, hitting at least
18 .300 in 14 seasons, and never striking out more than 97 times in a season. Hank led the
19 league in batting two times, home runs four times, and RBI four times while winning three
20 Gold Gloves for defense and one National League MVP. His 25 appearances in the All-Star
21 game speak to his immense popularity and longstanding greatness; and

22 WHEREAS, Hank's most memorable moment also took the greatest toll on him. Facing
23 intense opposition and threats of death, Hank pursued a place in history once thought
24 unattainable. On the night of April 8, 1974, Hank Aaron hit a long ball for the ages. When
25 home run number 715 sailed over the left field wall in Atlanta Stadium, it was a seminal
26 moment for Atlanta, Georgia, and the South. Hank brought us together like no one else. He
27 was our hero. He was our Home Run King; and

28 WHEREAS, Hank's astonishing career did not end when he retired from baseball. He was
29 a trail-blazing executive in the Braves front office, helping build one of the best
30 organizations in professional sports. He built an empire of automobile dealerships and
31 restaurants that still thrive today; and

32 WHEREAS, the nation has responded to his greatness with recognition fit for the Home Run
33 King. He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility. In
34 1999, Major League Baseball created the Hank Aaron Award to honor the best offensive
35 player in each league. He has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest
36 civilian honor in the United States. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund presented him with the
37 Thurgood Marshall Lifetime Achievement Award and established the Hank Aaron
38 Humanitarian in Sports Award in his honor; and

39 WHEREAS, Hank left this earth in 2021, but his impact continues to be felt. He and his wife,
40 Billye, started the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation to provide scholarships at
41 HBCUs around the country. The Braves, Major League Baseball, and the Major League
42 Baseball Players Association established the Henry Louis Aaron Fund, which supports
43 Hank's lifelong passion to increase minority participation in baseball on the field and in front
44 offices; and

45 WHEREAS, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his momentous achievement, the
46 State of Georgia recognizes Henry Louis Aaron for the profound impact he had on our state,
47 the nation, and the world. With one swing of the bat, Hank inspired everyone to overcome
48 hatred, division, and prejudice and to accomplish things that no one ever thought possible.

49 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
50 the members of this body recognize April 8, 2024, as Henry Louis Aaron Day.

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
52 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
53 public and the press.