

House Resolution 881

By: Representatives Jackson of the 128th, Belton of the 112th, Williams of the 168th, Wade of the 9th, Erwin of the 28th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Encouraging each public school in this state to study the Civil Rights Era and related subjects
2 described herein to affirm the commitment of the free peoples of this state to reject bigotry,
3 to champion equal protection under the law as a foundational principle of our republic, and
4 to act in opposition to injustice wherever it may occur; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, during the period in American history known as the Civil Rights Era,
6 reform-minded Americans organized to press for a rejection of the doctrine of "separate but
7 equal" and to repeal the Jim Crow-era laws in parts of the United States that embodied such
8 doctrine; and

9 WHEREAS, one of the universal lessons of the Civil Rights Era is that hatred on the basis
10 of immutable characteristics, not just race or ethnicity, but also characteristics such as
11 nationality, religious belief, disability, or sex, can overtake any nation or society, leading to
12 profound injustice; and

13 WHEREAS, there is no greater authority on the destructive nature of bigotry, nor is there a
14 better cure, than the work and philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his principles
15 of nonviolent social justice toward productive goals; and

16 WHEREAS, it is vital to the future of our constitutional republic that we build empathy in
17 our students by inspiring them to think and talk about why and how to pursue the greater
18 good of universal civil rights; and

19 WHEREAS, a curriculum for the study of the Civil Rights Era could serve to educate
20 students about the natural law and natural rights principles that informed the leadership of
21 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the civil rights movement and the tactics and strategies of
22 nonviolent resistance that he championed in response to Jim Crow laws; to educate students
23 about the Civil Rights Era and the universal lesson that hatred on the basis of immutable
24 characteristics such as race, sex, or ethnicity or other characteristics such as nationality,
25 religious belief, or disability can overtake any nation or society and lead to profound
26 injustice; and to reinforce such lessons, a curriculum is needed for studying the events of the
27 Civil Rights Era and other acts of discriminatory injustice around the world.

28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
29 each public school in this state is encouraged to study the Civil Rights Era and related
30 subjects described herein to affirm the commitment of the free peoples of this state to reject
31 bigotry, to champion equal protection under the law as a foundational principle of our
32 republic, and to act in opposition to injustice wherever it may occur.

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives recommends that each
34 public school in this state is encouraged to include in its curriculum the study of the events
35 of the Civil Rights Era; the natural law and natural rights principles that the Rev. Dr. Martin
36 Luther King, Jr., drew from that informed his leadership of the civil rights movement; and
37 the tactics and strategies of nonviolent resistance that he championed in response to the Jim
38 Crow laws of that era.

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
40 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
41 head of each department, division, board, bureau, commission, or other agency of the state
42 government or any state authority.