

2013-J249

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing the 84th Birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his tremendous contributions to civil rights and American society, and the 27th Anniversary of the national holiday that honors his birth and achievements

WHEREAS, Today we celebrate the life and extraordinary achievements of one of our nation's most beloved and influential leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 27th Anniversary of the holiday that honors his birth and achievements; and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on Tuesday, January 15, 1929, at his family home in Atlanta, Georgia, and was the first son and second child born to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., and Alberta Williams King; and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr. began his education at the Yonge Street Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, attended the Atlanta University Laboratory School and Booker T. Washington High School, and was admitted to Morehouse College at the age of 15; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 19, Martin Luther King, Jr. graduated from Morehouse College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, and three years later in 1951 was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, where he also studied at the University of Pennsylvania, and won several awards for most outstanding student, among which was the Crozer fellowship for graduate study at a university of his choice; and

WHEREAS, In 1951, at the age of 22, Martin Luther King, Jr. began doctoral studies in Systematic Theology at Boston University, and also studied at Harvard University, and at the age of 26, was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Boston University in 1955; and

WHEREAS, During his studies at Boston and Harvard Universities, Dr. King married the former Coretta Scott of Marion, Alabama in 1953; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King entered the Christian ministry and was ordained in February of 1948 at the age of 19 at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, and became Pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama, from September of 1954 to November of 1959, when he

resigned to move home to Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, the organization which was responsible for the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott, which began in 1955 and lasted 381 days; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was incarcerated many times for his participation in civil rights activities, was a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he led from 1957 to 1968, and was the leader of the 1963 March on Washington for Civil Rights, which is one of the largest peaceful demonstrations in American history and is a defining moment in this nation's civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was honored countless times for his leadership of the United States Civil Rights Movement, including his selection by TIME magazine as Most Outstanding Personality of 1957 and Man of the Year of 1963, and his selection by LINK MAGAZINE of India, the home of Mahatma Gandhi, as one of the sixteen world leaders who had contributed the most to the advancement of freedom during 1959; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King's receipt in 1964 of the Nobel Peace Prize, at the age of 35, made him the youngest recipient of that prestigious award, and one of only three Black Americans who have received that award, along with Dr. Ralph Bunche and President Barack Obama, whose journey to become President owes no small debt to the journey Dr. King and the millions of Americans who walked hand in hand with him undertook to end segregation and remind Americans of the great moral underpinnings of our

federal constitution which provides that we are all created equal and of the incredible power of the American ideal that we all deserve to live in a free and just society; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, by James Earl Ray, and was mourned by millions of Americans of all ages, races, creeds and colors on the national day of mourning declared by President Lyndon Johnson; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King's birthday was made into a national holiday in 1986, was first celebrated in all fifty states in the year 2000, and is the only federal holiday to honor a private American citizen; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King stands in a long line of great American leaders and represents the historical culmination and living embodiment of a spirit of united purpose, rooted in Black African culture and the American Dream; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King taught us that through non-violence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate; acceptance dissipates prejudice; and mutual regard cancels resentment; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King manifestly contributed to the cause of America's freedom; his commitment to human dignity is visibly mirrored in the spiritual, economic and political dimensions of the civil rights movement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the life of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., whose untimely death robbed America of his leadership at too early a date, and whose deeds and words transformed America and live in our homes, schools and public institutions to this day, continuing to inspire the millions of Americans whose lives of purpose and achievement might not have been possible but for Dr. King's leadership and the examples set by the millions of Americans who joined him in one of the great moral crusades of the 20th century; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body calls upon its members and all New Yorkers to observe the day of Dr. King's birth as a day of service to our family, friends, neighbors and those less fortunate than ourselves, and to moral causes greater than ourselves, and to the Great State of New York, in keeping with the ideals of the national Martin Luther King Day of Service, which was started by former Pennsylvania state Senator Harris Wofford and, Congressman John Lewis, from Atlanta, Georgia, who co-authored the King Holiday and Service Act, signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1994; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Dr. King and to the King Center in Atlanta.