

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 7

Introduced by Assembly Members Swanson, Lieu, and Mendoza

January 6, 2009

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 7—Relative to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 7, as introduced, Swanson. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

This measure would designate that January 19, 2009, be observed as the official memorial of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth, commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement in changing public policy in California and in the United States of America.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Monday, January 19, 2009, marks the 23rd National
- 2 Celebration of the National Holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King,
- 3 Jr. and his fight for civil and human rights; and
- 4 WHEREAS, On Thursday, January 15, 2009, Dr. Martin Luther
- 5 King, Jr. would have been 80 years of age; and
- 6 WHEREAS, On April 10, 1970, California became the first
- 7 state to pass legislation making Dr. King's birthday a school
- 8 holiday and, subsequently, a statewide holiday; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan)
- 10 submitted the first legislation for a national King Holiday, which
- 11 was signed into law by President Ronald Wilson Reagan, on
- 12 November 2, 1983; and

1 WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, marked the first observance of
2 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped
4 change public policy from segregation to integration, resulting in
5 the repeal of the post-Reconstruction era state laws mandating
6 racial segregation in the South known as the “Black Codes,” in
7 the passage of laws aimed at ending economic and social
8 segregation in the North, and in the passage of the Civil Rights
9 Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other
10 antidiscrimination, full citizen participation laws; and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement
12 specifically changed public policy from closed access to open
13 access in education, including higher education, employment and
14 labor laws, transportation policy, election laws, and other aspects
15 of public policy, particularly those relating to human rights; and

16 WHEREAS, These public policy changes at the national level
17 influenced many changes in California public policy manifest in
18 the Unruh Civil Rights Act and the Rumford Fair Housing Act, in
19 open enrollment and access to higher education, specifically with
20 respect to the California State University and the University of
21 California, and in employment and labor laws, transportation
22 policy, election laws, and other aspects of public policy; and

23 WHEREAS, The unfinished business of Dr. King and the Civil
24 Rights Movement was and is the plight of the poor, the fight against
25 war and for worldwide peace, and the struggle for a fair, equitable,
26 and sensible economic system; and

27 WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement noted
28 that a majority of Americans lived below the poverty line, and that
29 the huge income gaps between rich and poor, called for “changes
30 in the structure of our society”; and

31 WHEREAS, Dr. King, in the last months of his life, began
32 organizing a Poor People’s Campaign to, among other things,
33 assemble “a multiracial army of the poor that would descend on
34 Washington—engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience at the
35 Capitol, if need be—until Congress enacted a poor people’s bill
36 of rights”; and

37 WHEREAS, All of the aforementioned concerns and more
38 continue to be the quest of civil and human rights organizations
39 in the great State of California, across America, and throughout
40 the world; and

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought to change public
2 policy from the “self-inflicted wound of segregation to the
3 pluralistic diverse democracy” we continue to construct today; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights
5 Movement serve as a model for principled leadership and forward
6 thinking, bipartisan public policy; now, therefore, be it

7 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
8 *thereof concurring*, That Monday, January 19, 2009, be observed
9 as the official memorial of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birth and
10 his work in the Civil Rights Movement; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That this day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the
12 Civil Rights Movement be commemorated for their help in
13 changing public policy from segregation to integration, for the
14 betterment of this, the great State of California and these United
15 States of America; and be it further

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