

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 7

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 61

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

[Filed with Secretary of State July 2, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 7, 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, and 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.

WHEREAS, Monday, January 19, 2009, marks the 23rd National Celebration of the National Holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his fight for civil and human rights; and

WHEREAS, On Thursday, January 15, 2009, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been 80 years of age; and

WHEREAS, On April 10, 1970, California became the first state to pass legislation making Dr. King's birthday a school holiday and, subsequently, a statewide holiday; and

WHEREAS, Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan) submitted the first legislation for a national King Holiday, which was signed into law by President Ronald Wilson Reagan, on November 2, 1983; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, These public policy changes at the national level influenced many changes in California public policy manifest in the Unruh Civil Rights Act and the Rumford Fair Housing Act, in open enrollment and access to

higher education, specifically with respect to the California State University and the University of California, and in employment and labor laws, transportation policy, election laws, and other aspects of public policy; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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