

House Resolution

No. 10

Introduced by Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer

February 26, 2015

House Resolution No. 10—Relative to the 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

1 WHEREAS, March 7, 2015, will mark 50 years since the brave
2 Foot Soldiers of the Voting Rights Movement first attempted to
3 march from Selma to Montgomery on Bloody Sunday in protest
4 against the denial of their right to vote and were brutally assaulted
5 by Alabama state troopers; and

6 WHEREAS, Beginning in 1964, members of the Student
7 Nonviolent Coordinating Committee attempted to register
8 African-Americans to vote throughout the State of Alabama; and

9 WHEREAS, These efforts were designed to ensure that every
10 American citizen would be able to exercise their constitutional
11 right to vote and have their voices heard; and

12 WHEREAS, By December of 1964, many of these efforts
13 remained unsuccessful. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., working with
14 leaders from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and
15 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, began to organize
16 protests throughout Alabama; and

17 WHEREAS, On March 7, 1965, over 500 voting rights marchers,
18 known as Foot Soldiers, gathered on the Edmund Pettus Bridge
19 in Selma, Alabama, in peaceful protest of the denial of their most
20 sacred and constitutionally protected right—the right to vote; and

21 WHEREAS, Led by John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent
22 Coordinating Committee and Rev. Hosea Williams of the Southern
23 Christian Leadership Conference, these Foot Soldiers began the

1 march towards the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery,
2 Alabama; and

3 WHEREAS, As the Foot Soldiers crossed the Edmund Pettus
4 Bridge, they were confronted by a wall of Alabama state troopers
5 who brutally attacked and beat them; and

6 WHEREAS, Americans across the country witnessed this tragic
7 turn of events as news stations broadcast the brutality on a day
8 that would be later known as Bloody Sunday; and

9 WHEREAS, Two days later, on Tuesday, March 9, 1965, nearly
10 2,500 Foot Soldiers led by Dr. Martin Luther King risked their
11 lives once more and attempted a second peaceful march starting
12 at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. This second attempted march was
13 later known as Turnaround Tuesday; and

14 WHEREAS, Fearing for the safety of these Foot Soldiers who
15 received no protection from federal or state authorities during this
16 second march, Dr. King led the marchers to the base of the Edmund
17 Pettus Bridge and stopped. Dr. King kneeled and offered a prayer
18 of solidarity and walked back to the church; and

19 WHEREAS, Lyndon B. Johnson, inspired by the bravery and
20 determination of these Foot Soldiers and the atrocities they
21 endured, announced his plan for a voting rights bill aimed at
22 securing the precious right to vote for all citizens during an address
23 to Congress on March 15, 1965; and

24 WHEREAS, On March 17, 1965, one week after Turnaround
25 Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Frank M. Johnson ruled that the Foot
26 Soldiers had a First Amendment right to petition the government
27 through peaceful protest and ordered federal agents to provide full
28 protection to the Foot Soldiers during the Selma to Montgomery
29 Voting Rights March; and

30 WHEREAS, Judge Johnson's decision overturned Alabama
31 Governor George Wallace's prohibition on the protest due to public
32 safety concerns; and

33 WHEREAS, On March 21, 1965, under the court order, the U.S.
34 Army, the federalized Alabama National Guard, and countless
35 federal agents and marshals escorted nearly 8,000 Foot Soldiers
36 from the start of their heroic journey in Selma, Alabama to their
37 safe arrival on the steps of the Alabama State Capitol Building on
38 March 25, 1965; and

39 WHEREAS, The extraordinary bravery and sacrifice these Foot
40 Soldiers displayed in pursuit of a peaceful march from Selma to

1 Montgomery brought national attention to the struggle for equal
2 voting rights, and served as the catalyst for Congress to pass the
3 Voting Rights Act of 1965, which President Johnson signed into
4 law on August 6, 1965; now, therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That to
6 commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Movement
7 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, it is befitting
8 for the California State Assembly to commemorate March 7, 2015,
9 in honor of the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday,
10 Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting
11 Rights March during March of 1965, which served as a catalyst
12 for the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk provide copies of this resolution
14 to the author for appropriate distribution.