



H.Res. 73 - Observing the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and encouraging the people of the United States to observe the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and for other purposes

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 73 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House under a motion to suspend the rules. This resolution was introduced by Representative John Lewis (D-GA) on January 16, 2009.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 73 resolves that the House of Representatives

- Observes the 80th birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.;
- Pledges to advance the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and
- Encourages the people of the United States to--
 - observe the 80th birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the life of Dr. King;
 - commemorate the legacy of Dr. King, so that, as Dr. King hoped, "one day this Nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal'; and
 - remember the message of Dr. King and rededicate themselves to Dr. King's goal of a free and just United States.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. King graduated from high school at the age of 15 and from Moorehouse College in 1948 with a B.A. Both Dr. King's father and grandfather had graduated from Moorhouse College. Dr. King later earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree at Crozer Theological Seminary, and completed his doctorate at Boston University in 1955. While in Boston, he met and married Coretta Scott.

Dr. King became the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, while also serving as a member on the executive board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In December of 1955, Dr. King led a non-violent demonstration against segregated busses, lasting 382 days. During the days of the bus boycott, Dr. King's home was bombed, and he was also arrested. In June of 1956, the Supreme Court's decision in *Browder v. Gayle* declared laws requiring busses to be segregated as unconstitutional.

In 1957, Dr. King was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was formed to provide leadership during the civil rights movement. Between 1957 and 1968, Dr. King traveled over 6 million miles and spoke over 2,500 times to promote the cause of the civil rights movement. Over these eleven years, he 1) led a protest in Birmingham, Alabama, inspiring him to write the manifesto, "Letters from a Birmingham Jail" 2) organized demonstrations calling for blacks to be allowed to register as voters, and 3) led a peaceful march in Washington, DC of over 250,000 people where he delivered his address, "I Have a Dream." At the age of 35, Dr. King became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified that he had been selected, Dr. King donated the \$54,123 award accompanying the Prize towards the efforts of the civil rights movement.



On April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was participating in a workers rights rally for black trash collectors. His funeral services took place on April 9, 1968, at Ebenezer Baptist Church and at Moorehouse College, both in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan declared January 15 to be nationally recognized as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, making the day of Dr. King's birth a national holiday.

STAFF CONTACT

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