

1 HR118  
2 157808-1  
3 By Representative Colston  
4 RFD:  
5 First Read: 04-FEB-14

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8 RECOGNIZING MARIA GITIN FOR OUTSTANDING CIVIL RIGHTS  
9 PARTICIPATION.

10  
11 WHEREAS, in the spring semester of 1965, Maria  
12 Gitin, a 19-year-old freshman at San Francisco State College,  
13 joined hundreds of other college students who responded to the  
14 call of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to volunteer for  
15 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) Summer  
16 Community Organization and Political Education (SCOPE)  
17 Project; SCOPE was a voter education and registration drive  
18 headed by Reverend Hosea L. Williams, focused on supporting  
19 the African American voting rights Movement in the Deep South  
20 communities where Black citizens were denied the vote; and

21 WHEREAS, she raised funds so that she could attend  
22 an intensive training orientation in Atlanta where she learned  
23 from now-legendary civil rights leaders, after which she was  
24 assigned to work with Dan Harrell and Major Johns of SCLC in  
25 Wilcox County, Alabama; and

26 WHEREAS, Maria Gitin wrote not only about her  
27 experiences, but gathered the stories of her friends and

1 personal heroes in the fight against racism during the summer  
2 of 1965; for over six years, she worked diligently to research  
3 and write her book, This Bright Light of Ours: Stories from  
4 the Voting Rights Fight, published by The University of  
5 Alabama Press; the purpose of Ms. Gitin's book is to provide  
6 greater awareness of the unknown heroes and the grassroots  
7 workers in the Civil Rights Movement in the Alabama Black Belt  
8 and to inspire residents of all ethnicities to work towards a  
9 more integrated and prosperous future for this region; and

10 WHEREAS, by writing This Bright Light of Ours:  
11 Stories from the Voting Rights Fight, Ms. Gitin honors the  
12 courageous unsung civil rights heroes of Wilcox County,  
13 Alabama, by telling their stories in their words and the  
14 University of Alabama Press has ensured that by publishing  
15 these stories in a textbook and for popular markets that these  
16 stories will not be lost but preserved for future generations;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, today, we honor Maria Gitin and all  
19 peaceful Wilcox County Freedom Fighters for their efforts in  
20 the past and their continued roles as advocates for Civil  
21 Rights, and for documenting the history of this period and for  
22 her continued contributions to individuals and organizations  
23 that benefit Wilcox County, as well as for her service as a  
24 national speaker, cultural diversity trainer and voting rights  
25 advocate; now therefore,

26 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF  
27 THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That this body recognizes,

1 appreciates, and thanks Maria Gitin and all the Civil Rights  
2 Movement veterans and local Freedom Fighters who helped  
3 communities such as Wilcox County learn to exercise their  
4 constitutionally given rights to vote and to peacefully  
5 assemble.