

1 HR12
2 216424-2
3 By Representative Gray
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 13-JAN-22

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8 COMMEMORATING THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING,
9 JR.

10
11 WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
12 dedicated his life to securing the nation's fundamental
13 principles of liberty and justice for all citizens;

14 WHEREAS, Dr. King was the leading Civil Rights
15 advocate of his time; spearheading the Civil Rights Movement
16 in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, earning
17 worldwide recognition as an eloquent and articulate
18 spokesperson for equality; and

19 WHEREAS, Dr. King began attending Morehouse College
20 in Atlanta, Georgia, at the age of 15; he received a
21 Bachelor's Degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, following in
22 the footsteps of his father and grandfather; and

23 WHEREAS, in 1951, Dr. King received his Bachelor of
24 Divinity from Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania;
25 additionally, in 1955, he received his Doctor of Philosophy
26 from Boston University; and

1 WHEREAS, in Boston, Dr. King met Coretta Scott, his
2 life partner and fellow Civil Rights activist; they married on
3 June 18, 1953, and had two sons and two daughters; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. King was ordained in the Christian
5 ministry in February 1948, at the age of 19, at Ebenezer
6 Baptist Church, in Atlanta, Georgia; he became the Assistant
7 Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church; and

8 WHEREAS, in 1954, Dr. King accepted the call of
9 Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama; he was
10 Pastor there until November 1959, when he resigned to move
11 back to Atlanta to lead the Southern Christian Leadership
12 Conference; and

13 WHEREAS, from 1960 until his death in 1968, Dr. King
14 was again Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, along with his
15 father; and

16 WHEREAS, between 1957 and 1968, Dr. King traveled
17 over 6,000,000 miles, spoke over 2,500 times, and wrote five
18 books and numerous articles, supporting efforts around the
19 nation to end injustice and bring about social change and
20 desegregation; and

21 WHEREAS, in order to observe, reflect, and celebrate
22 the fullness of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy,
23 we must take up and reckon with Dr. King's rejection of the
24 economic status quo and shift toward economic justice; and

25 WHEREAS, Dr. King believed that without economic
26 justice, it would be impossible to achieve the full

1 citizenship that was promised to all marginalized people in
2 the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. King, Marion Wright, and the Southern
4 Christian Leadership Conference launched the Poor People's
5 Campaign as the beginning of a new cooperation, understanding,
6 and a determination by the poor people of all colors and
7 backgrounds to assert and win their right to a decent life and
8 respect for their culture and dignity; and

9 WHEREAS, at its conception, Dr. King organized 2,000
10 poor people to go to Washington, D.C., southern states, and
11 northern cities to meet with government officials to demand
12 jobs, unemployment insurance, a fair minimum wage, and
13 education for poor adults and children; and

14 WHEREAS, on May 12, 1968, roughly one month after
15 the assassination of Dr. King, Mrs. Coretta Scott King led
16 thousands of women to launch the Poor People's Campaign; on
17 May 13, 1968, Resurrection City was erected on the National
18 Mall in Washington, D.C.; over the next month, demonstrators
19 outlasted the staggering heat and demanded economic
20 opportunity at different federal agencies; and

21 WHEREAS, as a result of the 1968 leg of the Poor
22 People's Campaign, 200 counties received free surplus food
23 distribution and some federal agencies agreed to hire poor
24 people to lead poverty programs; and

25 WHEREAS, the Poor People's Campaign continues today,
26 advocating for their Declaration of Rights and the Poor
27 People's Moral Agenda, which tackles systematic racism,

1 poverty, inequality, ecological devastation, national
2 morality, war economy, and militarism; and

3 WHEREAS, according to the Institute for Economic and
4 Racial Equity at The Heller School for Social Policy and
5 Management at Brandeis University, policy drives the racial
6 wealth gap; this means that policy changes, rather than
7 behavioral changes, are the key in closing the wealth gap
8 across racial groups; as legislators who craft state policy,
9 general assemblies must ensure that the policies they create
10 do not exacerbate and work to shrink the existing disparities;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic amplified and
13 worsened the existing wealth inequalities across racial
14 groups; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. King's economic justice work remains
16 unfinished today; State Legislatures must commit to and
17 reaffirm their commitment to manifesting and actualizing the
18 fullness of Dr. King's dream; and

19 WHEREAS, in 2020, the United States poverty rate was
20 11.4 percent which increased from 2019; there are
21 approximately 37.2 million people in poverty; there was an
22 increase of 3.3 million people in poverty from 2019 to 2020;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, the poverty rate for children under the age
25 of 18 was 16.1 percent in 2020; and

26 WHEREAS, 19.5 percent of Black people in the United
27 States are in poverty; Black Americans had the highest rate of

1 poverty across racial groups examined in the United States
2 Census Report; and

3 WHEREAS, Alabama is one of the states with the
4 highest poverty rates in the nation with 16.7 percent of its
5 population below the poverty line; and

6 WHEREAS, the real median household income for Black
7 people is the lowest across all racial groups (\$45,870) and is
8 \$10,000 less than the next group; and

9 WHEREAS, based on the United States Census, the real
10 median household income is \$22,000 less than the average real
11 median household income for all races; the real median income
12 for Black people is \$29,000; and

13 WHEREAS, the median net worth for Black households
14 is \$20,730; while the net worth for non-Hispanic White
15 households is \$181,440; Black households have the lowest
16 wealth attainment across the groups observed in the data; and

17 WHEREAS, in January 2022, Black unemployment is up
18 to 7 percent, while national unemployment is down to 3.9
19 percent; now therefore,

20 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
21 THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the State of Alabama will
22 continue to commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King,
23 Jr.