

# HR71 INTRODUCED



1 HR71  
2 SCDG755-1  
3 By Representatives Chestnut, Lawrence  
4 RFD:  
5 First Read: 18-Feb-25



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HR\_\_\_\_\_ COMMEMORATING THE RENAMING OF THE MARION POST OFFICE  
AFTER CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER, ALBERT TURNER, SR.

WHEREAS, it is with great pleasure and pride that the  
Legislature of Alabama commemorates the renaming of the  
Marion Post Office after Civil Rights leader, Albert Turner,  
Sr.; and

WHEREAS, born on February 29, 1936, in Marion,  
Alabama, Albert Turner was one of 12 children of landowning  
farmers, Emerson and Lottie Turner; several generations of  
Turners had owned land in Perry County and had acquired a  
higher level of education than many of their peers; Emerson  
Turner had been a vocal community advocate for racial  
equality and began the first public school busing system in  
Perry County, helping rural Black students access the  
all-Black Lincoln School in Marion; and

WHEREAS, in 1952, Albert graduated from the Lincoln  
School, serving as class president; he enrolled at Alabama  
A&M University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree  
with a double concentration in History and Mechanical Arts;  
foreshadowing his legacy, he participated in several  
Huntsville-area, student-led Civil Rights demonstrations  
while in college; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 1957, he married Evelyn Hatch  
and they would have three sons and a daughter; together, the



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29 couple became active leaders in Perry County's growing Civil  
30 Rights protests; and

31 WHEREAS, having returned to Perry County, Albert  
32 tried to register to vote in 1962, but was turned away due  
33 to his "lack of education," even though many less-educated  
34 white people were allowed to vote; infuriated, Albert and  
35 Evelyn transformed the isolated Sportsman Club, a  
36 Black-owned juke joint, into a covert meeting place to  
37 coordinate Civil Rights protests; and

38 WHEREAS, in 1963, the Turners and fellow activist,  
39 Spencer Hogue, founded the Perry County Civic League (PCCL);  
40 the PCCL organized Black protests and boycotts in Marion  
41 calling for the racial integration of public facilities and  
42 schools and for voting rights; the PCCL established programs  
43 for poor, elderly, and disabled Blacks while also assisting  
44 Black farmers and businessmen in applying for federal loans  
45 and program assistance; and

46 WHEREAS, after filing a series of federal lawsuits,  
47 Albert's activism led to the successful registration of 150  
48 Black voters in Perry County; his grassroots activism and  
49 organizational skills attracted the attention of national  
50 civil rights organizations; in the fall of 1964, his  
51 successful mobilization efforts influenced the Southern  
52 Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to join the existing  
53 Black Belt movement; and

54 WHEREAS, the SCLC then appointed Mr. Turner as field  
55 secretary for Alabama in recognition for his leadership and  
56 dedication to the Civil Rights movement; he would later help



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57 found the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute in  
58 Selma at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge; and

59 WHEREAS, Albert remained committed to promoting  
60 social, economic, and political opportunities for all; he  
61 led the Southwest Alabama Farmer's Cooperative Association  
62 (SAFCA) that improved Black farmer access to government  
63 loans and programs; during the late 1970s, as America  
64 confronted an energy crisis, he and the SAFCA advocated for  
65 the expanded use of gasohol, a blend of petroleum and  
66 ethanol, as a means for breaking the nation's dependence on  
67 foreign oil imports; and

68 WHEREAS, in 1985, Mr. Turner became embroiled in a  
69 voting rights scandal when he, Evelyn, and Spencer Hogue  
70 were indicted by U.S. Attorney, Jeff Sessions; he accused  
71 the three, later known as the Marion Three, of 29 counts of  
72 mail fraud and illegally tampering with paper absentee  
73 ballots in the September 1984 Perry County Democratic  
74 Primary; following an emotional three-week trial in Selma, a  
75 jury of seven Black and five white members deliberated for  
76 fewer than three hours before acquitting the Marion Three of  
77 all charges; their acquittal significantly impaired the  
78 remaining efforts to undermine the application of the 1965  
79 Voting Rights Act in Alabama; and

80 WHEREAS, in 1988, after seven attempts, Mr. Turner  
81 won a heated contest to become a member of the Perry County  
82 Commission; during his four terms as commissioner, he  
83 championed education and public health initiatives and  
84 promoted economic development for poor and working-class



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85 residents; now therefore,

86 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
87 LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That Mr. Albert Turner, Sr. is  
88 highly commended for his efforts in desegregating Alabama  
89 and making it a safer and fairer place for all to live; with  
90 the full support of every member of Alabama's congressional  
91 delegation, the Marion Post Office will be renamed the  
92 "Albert Turner, Sr. Post Office Building" in a testament to  
93 his works that have shaped the future of our state.