

2004 SESSION

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 72

Offered January 14, 2004

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Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the "I Have A Dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Patron—Marsh

WHEREAS, forty years ago on August 28, 1963, tired and worn, but determined to achieve racial equality, thousands of African Americans and persons of other races gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in the sweltering heat to hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver an address that pricked the soul of the nation and challenged it to live up to the principles on which it was founded; and

WHEREAS, on August 28, 1963, life for African Americans in the United States was characterized by a rigid system of segregation that permeated every aspect of society, and such persons lived daily by denial of the right to vote, the threat of murder for seeking the right to vote, and they encountered on a daily basis segregated restaurants, movie theaters, hotels, public restrooms, schools, and drinking fountains; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have progressed significantly over the past 40 years since the March on Washington; however, the dream of which Dr. King spoke so eloquently "is not yet fulfilled"; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, public transportation and accommodations, schools, and courtrooms are desegregated, and African Americans have the right to vote, yet the working poor cannot afford health insurance, the sick and elderly make choices between paying for rent and paying for medicine, and the disenfranchised "languish in the corners of American society"; and

WHEREAS, because far too many young African-American men and women cannot yet touch the reality of that dream, 40 years later thousands of celebrants gathered on the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech that galvanized America's civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, it is vital to our common existence that we rededicate ourselves to make Dr. King's dream a reality so that all persons one day will be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin, and that all persons may one day be "free at last"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the 40th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech be recognized; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the president of the Virginia Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Virginia State Chapter, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

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