

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 387

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 5, 2014
 Agreed to by the Senate, March 7, 2014

WHEREAS, on July 2, 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law, legislation proposed by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy and the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, after the abolishment of slavery, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, commonly referred to as the Reconstruction Amendments, were adopted to end slavery, grant equal protection under the law, and extend the right to vote to all citizens without regard to race, color, or previous servitude; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was preceded by other legislative attempts, including the Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1870, 1871, and 1875, which bestowed upon African Americans the right to sue and be sued, to give evidence, and to hold real property and personal property and other social rights; and

WHEREAS, after Reconstruction, the rights previously afforded African Americans were stripped away by state constitutions, "Black Codes," and "Jim Crow" laws designed to circumvent and thwart the newfound freedoms of former slaves and their descendants; and

WHEREAS, under the doctrine of "separate but equal," established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), public schools, housing, drinking fountains, public services and accommodations, bus stops and transportation, courtrooms, restaurants, entertainment, the military, and other facilities were segregated; and

WHEREAS, in 1954, the historic United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), in which the doctrine of "separate but equal" was ruled unconstitutional, acted as one of the catalysts for the Civil Rights Movement, and African Americans were joined by many civil rights supporters throughout the nation, who endured attacks by dogs and high-pressure water hoses; brutal beatings; tear gas; illegal searches and arrests; threats; lynchings; bombings; mysterious disappearances of relatives, friends, and allies; decades of literacy and voter qualification tests and other illegal barriers to the right to vote; and invidious racism and unspeakable indignities to secure their freedom and equality; and

WHEREAS, on August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 people participated in the March on Washington, D.C., to demonstrate their support of civil rights for African American citizens, and the mass demonstration, as well as the violent attacks on peaceful demonstrators in Birmingham, Alabama, in the spring of 1963, galvanized support for national legislation against segregation, causing a cataclysmic change in the political and social order in America; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the nation will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans segregation on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin at all places of public accommodation and prohibits discrimination by employers and labor unions and the use of federal funds for any discriminatory program; and

WHEREAS, the Act subsequently has been amended by Congress to extend the protections of the law to disabled Americans, the elderly, and women in collegiate athletics programs; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended legal segregation, and it is fitting and appropriate that the enactment of this historic legislation be commemorated in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 hereby be commemorated and the citizens of the Commonwealth be encouraged to observe this important occasion in the history of the nation; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Education, the Executive Director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the presidents of the Virginia Bar Association and the Old Dominion Bar Association, the Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Virginia State Chapter, and the chairman of the Virginia chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 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.