



RESOLUTION

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS - A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

By: Jenkins and Ellison

COMMEMORATING THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

- Whereas: The conversation regarding full rights of citizenship for African Americans had been ongoing since the first slaves survived the journey to America in 1619; and
- Whereas: The discussion of citizenship continued into the Continental Congress when the framers of the constitution set forth plans to build a new nation; and
- Whereas: As a compromise to overcome tension between Southern and New England delegates, James Madison proposed that Blacks be recognized as 3/5ths of a human being, and this compromise which diminished the recognition, value, and worth of Black lives was codified into the new nation's foundational document itself; and
- Whereas: For more than 150 years, a wide variety of constituency groups including Quakers, Mennonites, and Abolitionists fought for the end of Slavery in America, resulting in the Civil War from 1861-1865; and
- Whereas: Upon the end of the war, Blacks were elected to public offices throughout the South, in the period known as Reconstruction; and
- Whereas: In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was ratified, which stated "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude"; and
- Whereas: Despite passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, discriminatory practices were implemented beginning in the late 1870s to keep Black people from practicing their rights as citizens, which included: violence, fraud, poll taxes, literacy tests, restrictive and arbitrary registration practices, and white primaries; and
- Whereas: For the next 80 years, African American leaders fought for the right to full citizenship and the right to vote; and
- Whereas: Organizations such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Council of Churches, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, the United Auto Workers, and a wide variety of activists, writers, actors, students, and others worked together and fought white supremacy and intolerance for the right to vote; and
- Whereas: On August 6, 1965, the U.S. Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, removing all restrictions to voting and extending constitutionally guaranteed access to the ballot box for Blacks, thus granting all Black people full rights of citizenship, an act that is considered to be the single greatest achievement of the movement led by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and
- Whereas: In the 55 years since its passage, tens of thousands of Blacks across America have been elected to public office, including 6 United States Senators and our nation's first Black President, Barack Obama; and
- Whereas: The 55th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act serves as a constant reminder that young people made possible its passage, with heroes that include John Lewis, Bob Moses, Judy Richardson, Diane Nash, James Forman, James Bevel, James Orange, Martin Luther King, and the hundreds of young college students from across the United States who participated in Freedom Summer; and
- Whereas: Much blood was spilled in the efforts to secure the right to vote for all Black people and, on this 55th anniversary, it is right and proper that we remember the martyrs who died so all people could vote, which includes: Herbert Lee, Medgar Evers, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Michael Henry Schwerner, Rev. James Reeb, Jonathan Daniels, Vernon Dehmer, and Viola Liuzzo; and
- Whereas: The 55th anniversary we celebrate today reminds us that this coming November we must honor our ancestors and prepare to do our duty as citizens in the most important election in this nation's history by registering to vote online and to encourage our family, friends, and neighbors to vote; and
- Whereas: The 55th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act also reminds us that the participation of the African American community, in particular, may make the difference in the upcoming election, and thus the future direction of our nation;

—NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED—

That the people of the great city of Minneapolis join citizens across the United States and the world in remembering the singular greatest achievement in social justice in the 20th Century by declaring August 6, 2020, as Voting Rights Act Remembrance Day in the City of Minneapolis.

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis hereby commemorates and honors the heroes who engaged in the struggle and who carry forward the mantle of that long and proud legacy today.

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis joins with civil rights icon Harry Belafonte, Danny Glover, Rob Reiner, Tony Shalhoub, our local and state political leadership, and Blackballotpower.com in calling upon all citizens of voting age to register and to vote on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Passed this the Thirty-first Day of July, 2020

Lisa Bender, President of the Council

Approved:

Jacob Frey, Mayor

Attest:

Casey Joe Carl, City Clerk