

February 6, 2023

SB 59, Proponent

Stacey Knoell, Executive Director, Kansas African American Affairs Commission

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stacey Knoell, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission. We at the Commission support SB59, designating the Thursday preceding the recognized holiday as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at the Capitol.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s impact on this country cannot be understated. His words have survived and only grown in significance and impact. His legacy is one that transcends political parties or ideological divides as his call is for us to recognize the humanity in each other and work together toward what America has always hoped to be.

The Kansas African American Affairs Commission has hosted a ceremonial march and Martin Luther King Jr. program on the Thursday preceding the third Monday for several years. Governors, Attorney Generals, House Representatives, Senators, community leaders, and citizens have gathered on the south steps to join in the march around the Capitol grounds. It is a display of unity when those may be sorely lacking. If one wonders why to undertake a march outside in the questionable January weather, the answer is found in the hope that we all carry through the blustery winds.

We support the passage of this bill and ask this Committee to do the same.