

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1703

A RESOLUTION commemorating August 28, 2013, for being the 50th anniversary of
The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

WHEREAS, The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place on August 28, 1963, in Washington, D.C., and was attended by an estimated 250,000 people, making it the largest demonstration ever seen in the nation's capital and one of the first to have extensive television coverage that pre-empted regularly scheduled programming; and

WHEREAS, The year of 1963 was noted for racial unrest, civil rights demonstrations and nationwide outrage sparked by media coverage of police actions in Birmingham, Alabama, where attack dogs and fire hoses were turned against protestors, many of whom were in their early teens or younger; and Martin Luther King, Jr., was arrested and jailed during these protests, writing his famous "Letter From Birmingham City Jail," which advocated civil disobedience against unjust laws; and

WHEREAS, The March on Washington represented a coalition of several civil rights organizations, each of which generally had different approaches and different agendas. The "Big Six" organizers were James Farmer, Congress of Racial Equality; Martin Luther King, Jr., Southern Christian Leadership Conference; John Lewis, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; A. Philip Randolph, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and Whitney Young, Jr., National Urban League; and

WHEREAS, The stated demands of the march were the passage of meaningful civil rights legislation; elimination of racial segregation in public schools; protection for demonstrators against police brutality; a major public-works program to provide jobs; passage of a law prohibiting racial discrimination in public and private hiring; a \$2 an hour minimum wage; and self-government for the District of Columbia, which had a black majority population; and

WHEREAS, President Kennedy originally discouraged the march, for fear that it might make the Congress vote against civil rights legislation in reaction to a perceived threat; however, once it became clear that the march would go on, he supported it; and

WHEREAS, The march began at the Washington Monument and ended at the Lincoln Memorial, and turned out to be both a protest and a communal celebration. The heavy police presence turned out to be unnecessary, as the march was noted for its civility and peacefulness; and

WHEREAS, The speakers included five of the "Big Six" civil rights leaders, because James Farmer, who was imprisoned for a protest in Louisiana at the time, had his speech read by Floyd McKissick; other speakers included Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers, and several Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious leaders; and

WHEREAS, The two most noteworthy speeches came from John Lewis and Martin Luther King, Jr.; King's speech, which he started with prepared remarks, remains one of the most famous speeches in American history. He warned fellow protesters not to "allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force." But then he departed from his script, shifting into the "I have a dream" theme he had used on prior occasions, speaking of an America where his children "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character;" and

WHEREAS, The march is widely credited for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, The March on Washington's 50th anniversary was commemorated last week with several events in Washington, D.C., and culminated with a rally on August 28, 2013, at the Lincoln Memorial, which featured speakers including members of the King family, Congressman John Lewis, former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, and President Barack Obama: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we commemorate August 28, 2013, for being the 50th anniversary of The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which was held on August 28, 1963, in Washington, D.C.; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send five enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Anthony Hensley, 318-East, State Capitol building, Topeka, Kansas 66612.

Senate Resolution No. 1703 was sponsored by Senators Hensley, Faust-Goudeau and Haley.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.