

1 A RESOLUTION honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

2 WHEREAS, Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., dedicated his life to  
3 securing our Nation's fundamental principles of liberty and justice for all; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. King was ordained in the Christian ministry in February 1948 at  
5 the age of 19 at Ebenezer Baptist Church, in Atlanta, Georgia, and became Assistant  
6 Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1954, Dr. King accepted the call of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church  
8 in Montgomery, Alabama, where he served as pastor until November 1959, when he  
9 resigned to move back to Atlanta to lead the Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
10 (SCLC); and

11 WHEREAS, from 1960 until his death in 1968, Dr. King remained in Atlanta and  
12 served as a pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church along with his father; and

13 WHEREAS, in order to observe, reflect, and celebrate the fullness of Rev. Dr.  
14 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy, we must take up and reckon with Dr. King's rejection of  
15 the economic status quo and shift toward economic justice; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. King believed that without economic justice, the people previously  
17 excluded from full participation in society would never fully achieve the promises and  
18 remedies guaranteed them by the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

19 WHEREAS, in his quest to achieve economic justice, Dr. King, along with Marion  
20 Wright and the SCLC, launched the Poor People's Campaign as the beginning of a new  
21 campaign of cooperation, understanding, and determination by people living in poverty to  
22 assert and win their right to a decent life, full of dignity and respect; and

23 WHEREAS, at the conception of the Poor People's Campaign, Dr. King organized  
24 2,000 people living in poverty to go to northern and southern states, and to Washington,  
25 D.C., to meet with government officials to demand jobs, unemployment insurance, a fair  
26 minimum wage, and education for adults and children living in poverty; and

27 WHEREAS, on May 12, 1968, roughly one month after the assassination of Dr.

1 King, Mrs. Coretta Scott King led thousands of women to advance the Poor People's  
2 Campaign, and one day later Resurrection City was erected on the National Mall in  
3 Washington, D.C., where, over the course of the next month, demonstrators outlasted the  
4 staggering heat and demanded economic opportunity at different federal agencies; and

5 WHEREAS, as a result of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, 200 counties received  
6 free surplus food distribution and some federal agencies agreed to hire people living in  
7 poverty to lead programs that directly impacted their communities; and

8 WHEREAS, the Poor People's Campaign continues today, advocating for their  
9 Declaration of Rights and the Poor People's Moral Agenda, which tackles systemic  
10 racism, poverty and inequality, ecological devastation, national morality, and war  
11 economy and militarism; and

12 WHEREAS, Dr. King's economic justice work remains unfinished today, and state  
13 legislatures must commit to and reaffirm their charge to manifest and actualize the  
14 fullness of Dr. King's dream; and

15 WHEREAS, according to the Institute for Economic and Racial Equity at the Heller  
16 School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, "policy drives the  
17 racial wealth gap," meaning "policy changes rather than behavioral changes" are the key  
18 in closing the wealth gap across racial groups; and

19 WHEREAS, as legislators who craft state policy, general assemblies must ensure  
20 that the policies they create do not exacerbate, but instead shrink the existing disparities;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic amplified and worsened the existing wealth  
23 inequalities across racial groups; and

24 WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census, in 2020 the poverty rate increased from  
25 2019 to 11.4%, with approximately 37.2 million people living in poverty, an increase of  
26 3.3 million people; and

27 WHEREAS, the poverty rate for children under 18 was 16.1% in 2020; and

1           WHEREAS, 19.5% of Black people in the United States live in poverty, the highest  
2 rate of poverty across racial groups; and

3           WHEREAS, some of the southern states with the highest poverty rates according to  
4 *Forbes* are:

5                   Mississippi: 20.3% of its population lives below the poverty line;

6                   Louisiana: 19.2% of its population lives below the poverty line;

7                   West Virginia: 17.6% of its population lives below the poverty line;

8                   Kentucky: 17.3% of its population lives below the poverty line;

9                   Arkansas: 17.0% of its population lives below the poverty line;

10                  Alabama: 16.7% of its population lives below the poverty line;

11                  Tennessee: 15.2% of its population lives below the poverty line;

12                  South Carolina: 15.2% of its population lives below the poverty line; and

13           WHEREAS, the real median household income for Black people, at \$45,870, is the  
14 lowest across all racial groups, and is \$10,000 less than the next group; and

15           WHEREAS, based on the U.S. Census, the real median household income for Black  
16 people is \$29,000 less than the average real median household income; and

17           WHEREAS, according to U.S. Census data, the median net worth for Black  
18 households is \$20,730, while the net worth of non-Hispanic White households is  
19 \$181,440, and Black households have the lowest wealth attainment across the groups  
20 observed; and

21           WHEREAS, as of January 2022, Black unemployment is up to 7% while national  
22 unemployment is down to 3.9%;

23           NOW, THEREFORE,

24 ***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the***  
25 ***Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

26           ➔Section 1. The members of the House of Representatives honor the life and  
27 legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and urge all Kentuckians to shape their lives by

1 those holy tenets of kindness, peace, and equality.

2       ➔Section 2. The Kentucky General Assembly will commit to supporting  
3 legislation that will champion the fullness of Dr. King's legacy and bring equity and fair  
4 opportunities for Black economic justice.

5       ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a  
6 copy of this Resolution to Representative Attica Scott.