

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 182

BY REPRESENTATIVES GAINES, BADON, BARROW, WESLEY BISHOP, BROSSETT, BURRELL, COX, DIXON, FRANKLIN, HONORE, HUNTER, GIROD JACKSON, KATRINA JACKSON, JAMES, JEFFERSON, TERRY LANDRY, NORTON, PIERRE, PRICE, SMITH, THIERRY, ALFRED WILLIAMS, AND PATRICK WILLIAMS AND SENATORS BROOME, BROWN, DORSEY-COLOMB, GALLOT, GUILLORY, MORRELL, MURRAY, PETERSON, AND TARVER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the deaths of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley, the four young women who were murdered in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

WHEREAS, on Sunday, September 15, 1963, the lives of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley were taken suddenly by a bomb planted in the basement of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, these four young women arrived at church early to prepare for Sunday School when the dynamite hidden under a bathroom by white supremacists detonated and killed all four of them; and

WHEREAS, the senseless and premature deaths of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley served as a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, on that tragic Sunday in 1963, the world took notice of the violence that was being inflicted in the struggle for equal rights; and

WHEREAS, this tragedy galvanized the Civil Rights Movement and sparked a surge of momentum that helped secure the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, justice was delayed for these four young martyrs and their families until 2002, thirty-nine years after the bombing, when the last of the four klansmen responsible for the bombing was charged and convicted of the crime; and

WHEREAS, these four young women are emblematic of so many who have lost their lives for the cause of freedom and equality, including Virgil Ware and James Johnny Robinson, two children who were also killed within hours of the 1963 church bombing; and

WHEREAS, these young women were eulogized by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and he was invited, along with the victims' families and other civil rights leaders, by President John F. Kennedy to the White House for one of the many meetings that led to the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, the legacy that these four young women left will live on in our minds and hearts for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the extraordinary sacrifice of these innocent lives sparked real and lasting changes as congress began to aggressively pass legislation that ensured equality; and

WHEREAS, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, which served as a meeting place for civil rights organizers, remains a powerful symbol of the movement for civil and human rights, and the church will host a ceremony to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing on Sunday, September 15, 2013; and

WHEREAS, on Friday, May 24, 2013, President Barack Obama signed legislation that bestowed the highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, upon Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley; and

WHEREAS, these young women who gave the ultimate sacrifice merit the highest measure of commendation and it is fitting to honor the four little black girls, as they became known, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley, posthumously in recognition of the fiftieth commemoration of the historical significance of the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in which the lives of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley were tragically taken, does hereby express to their families the deepest sympathy of the state of Louisiana for the loss of these young women who made the ultimate sacrifice for equality, does hereby recognize their deaths as a catalyst for the "Movement that Changed the World" that galvanized momentum to help secure the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and does hereby

record for posterity the immense pride that the memory of these four courageous, young women will forever bring to their friends and families, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, the city of Birmingham, the state of Alabama, and the United States of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to William A. Bell, Mayor of Birmingham, Alabama.

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE