

Reps. Clack, Murphy, Condino, Tobocman, Accavitti, Elkins, Law, Hopgood, Bieda, Lipsey, Adamini, Whitmer, Kolb, Gillard, Anderson, Byrum, Sheltroun, Brown, Ruth Johnson, Pappageorge, Meisner, Phillips, Hood, Farhat, Hart, Farrah, O'Neil, Sak, Plakas, Spade, Hunter, Kooiman, Hager, Ehardt, Mortimer, Stewart, Pumford, Gielegheem, Middaugh, Gaffney, Wojno, Moolenaar, Ward, LaJoy, Emmons, McConico, Waters, Acciavatti, Brandenburg, Daniels, Dennis, DeRossett, Gleason, Huizenga, Jamnick, LaSata, Minore, Richardville, Rivet, Shulman, Stallworth, Taub and Vagnozzi offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 240.

A resolution to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Brown et. al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS et.al., 347 U.S. 483, the 1954 United States Supreme Court decision that officially ended state and local government sanctioned school segregation in America.

Whereas, Between 1865 and 1875 there were various attempts to bestow upon emancipated African-Americans the same rights and protections under the law that other citizens enjoyed. Yet there were many who were not receptive to the idea of emancipated African-Americans and instituted Jim Crow laws and Black Codes as methods to circumvent most state and federal protections. These laws and codes served as a badge of second-class citizenry that deprived this emancipated population of their political rights, civil liberties, and economic opportunities; and

Whereas, In 1896, the United States Supreme Court stamped its seal of approval on Jim Crow laws and Black Codes when it upheld the state of Louisiana in the case Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), giving birth to "separate but equal," a doctrine that haunted this country and oppressed African-Americans for decades; and

Whereas, In the face of intense adversity, a group of multicultural visionaries responded to the calling of their forefathers and foremothers by founding the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909 to renew and reinvigorate the continued struggle against bigotry and second-class citizenship that was synonymous with being American; and

Whereas, The NAACP and others steadfastly fought to correct one of the gravest injustices of that era, state and local government sanctioned racial segregation of schools because education and hard work were considered among the cornerstones of success in America. African-American children could not attend school with white children solely because of the color of their skin. African-American students had to learn in substandard educational facilities, with lesser qualified teachers, amongst overcrowded classrooms, often with outdated secondhand textbooks, or no textbooks at all. There were no buses, no cafeterias, and no diverse class options, all the amenities that other students enjoyed. It was in the arena of education that the fallacy of "separate but equal" was best exemplified and African-American students learned hard that there was nothing equal about being separate; and

Whereas, A young African-American girl named Linda Brown could not attend the elementary school located in her neighborhood solely because of her skin color. Instead, she had to walk a mile or more to attend a school specifically set-up for children of her ethnicity. Her parents refused to settle for this way of life. They instead turned to their local NAACP; and

Whereas, Under the brilliant legal leadership of Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP continued on its jurisprudential path toward equality in education and eventually argued before the United States Supreme Court that state and local government sanctioned segregation in schools had a profound psychological and sociological effect on African-American children and served to perpetuate feelings of inferiority among African-American students. Brown was one of five cases challenging that segregation in education was unconstitutional; and

Whereas, On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court stunned the nation and set it on a path toward change. On that day, the United States Supreme Court demolished one of many lingering remnants of slavery and voiced the strong message that "in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." And as if to assure the nation that it neither stuttered

nor stumbled in its original ruling, one year later in a second case, Brown II, 349 U.S. 294 (1955), the Court ordered desegregation of schools “with all deliberate speed.” The Brown victory was the catalyst that sparked an unforgettable era of progress towards true equality not only in education, but in America; and

Whereas, Fifty years after Brown we stand holding the torch of our past and light of our future as we lead the fight against injustices that still exist in education systems around the country, including here in the state of Michigan, where we are challenged by residential segregation and socioeconomic inequities. It is in these economically depressed areas that high school drop-out rates are at their highest, state mandated test scores are at their lowest, and many students are hindered from reaching their highest potential. Such inequities showcase the difference between a dream achieved, a dream deferred, or no dream at all; and

Whereas, The task before us is to make certain that no child is left behind educationally, while knowing that all children need and deserve the same tools to make this concept a true reality. The challenge is still before us to make sure that all schools attract and keep the most qualified teachers, the best learning materials, and safe and modern facilities conducive to learning, whether the student hails from the wealthiest or poorest areas of Michigan. Simply put, there are no shortages of battles in the arena of education. The Brown decision was the starting point, not the end; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body commemorate the golden jubilee of Brown vs. Board of Education, and the end of state and local government sanctioned segregation in America’s education system. We stand proud in saluting the NAACP, the Brown family, and all those brave souls who fought valiantly for the enduring legacy that we celebrate and continue to protect today.

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the NAACP and the Brown family as evidence of our commemoration.