

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Jackson (11th),
Harden, Jackson (32nd), Walls, Butler,
Frazier, Simmons, Nunnelee, Gollott,
Browning, Dearing, Tollison, Thames, Wilemon,
Jackson (15th), Lee (35th), Moffatt,
Williamson, Pickering, Thomas, Albritton,
Chaney, Morgan, Dawkins, King, Horhn

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 559

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
2 LEGISLATURE ON THE DEATH OF CORETTA SCOTT KING, "THE FIRST LADY OF
3 CIVIL RIGHTS," AND CELEBRATING HER LIFE AND LEGACY.

4 WHEREAS, Coretta Scott King, the wife of United States civil
5 rights pioneer, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., died on
6 Tuesday, January 31, 2006, at the age of 78; and

7 WHEREAS, Coretta Scott King was a beacon of light and
8 defender of truth and righteousness. She touched many lives and
9 we will never forget her tireless efforts to advance the dream and
10 vision of equality and justice for all people; and

11 WHEREAS, born in Marion, Alabama, on April 27, 1927, Coretta
12 Scott graduated as Valedictorian of her high school class and
13 attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She received a
14 B.A. in music and education and then studied concert singing at
15 the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts,
16 where she received a degree in voice and violin; and

17 WHEREAS, while there, she met a Theology student from
18 Atlanta, Georgia, Martin Luther King, Jr., who was pursuing a
19 Doctorate at Boston University. They married on June 18, 1953, in
20 her hometown of Marion. As the young pastor began his civil
21 rights work in Montgomery, Alabama, Coretta Scott King worked
22 closely with him, organizing marches and sit-ins at segregated
23 restaurants while raising their four children: Yolanda Denise,
24 Martin Luther III, Dexter Scott and Bernice Albertine; and

25 WHEREAS, Mrs. King performed in "Freedom Concerts," singing
26 and reading poetry to raise money for the Southern Christian

27 Leadership Conference, the organization which Dr. King led as its
28 first president; and

29 WHEREAS, the family endured the beating, stabbing and jailing
30 of Dr. King. When her husband was killed in Memphis, Tennessee,
31 in 1968, just prior to a planned march, Mrs. King organized his
32 funeral, then went to Memphis and finished the march. She was a
33 staunch freedom fighter; and

34 WHEREAS, Mrs. King turned her grief into the nurturing of her
35 husband's legacy. The year her husband was killed, she
36 established The King Center in Atlanta, Georgia. A year later,
37 she published her memoir, "My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr."
38 She spoke out on behalf of racial and economic justice, women's
39 and children's rights, gay and lesbian dignity, religious freedom,
40 the needs of the poor and homeless, full employment, health care,
41 educational opportunities, nuclear disarmament and ecological
42 sanity; and

43 WHEREAS, Mrs. King and three of her children were arrested in
44 1985 while protesting apartheid at the South African Embassy in
45 Washington, D.C.; and

46 WHEREAS, apart from creating and running the foundation, she
47 also led the campaign to make Martin Luther King's January 15th
48 birthday a national holiday in the United States, which Congress
49 supported, and the first national observance of the holiday took
50 place in 1986; and

51 WHEREAS, Coretta Scott King would want Mississippi to
52 continue this march toward progress when it comes to disability
53 rights, women's rights, civil rights - and not retreat from it;
54 and

55 WHEREAS, our prayers are with her family and friends as they
56 go through this difficult time. Our thanks is to God, who blessed
57 us with a treasure in earthen vessels in the woman who was Coretta
58 Scott King. May she rest in peace and may we all do our part to
59 honor her life and legacy with our words and actions:

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
61 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
62 we do hereby express the sympathy of the Legislature on the death
63 of Coretta Scott King, the "First Lady of Civil Rights" and wife
64 of Civil Rights pioneer, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and
65 celebrate her life and legacy as an unwavering advocate of civil
66 and human rights and a champion of nonviolence which is to be
67 admired and emulated.

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a certified copy of this
69 resolution be forwarded by the Secretary of State to the President
70 of the United States and to the members of Mississippi's
71 congressional delegation, and be made available to the Capitol
72 Press Corps.