

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR30736-LG-783A (6/26)

Sponsors: Representatives Pierce, Bryant, and Hall (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
2 THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN.

3 Whereas, in November 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the staff of the
4 Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) met to discuss the direction of the
5 civil rights movement; and

6 Whereas, several discussions by this group of leaders led to the creation of
7 the Poor People's Campaign, a movement to broadly address economic inequality and
8 poverty with nonviolent direct action; and

9 Whereas, it was envisioned that the Poor People's Campaign would address
10 the plight of all Americans struggling to make a living and would be the most massive,
11 widespread campaign of civil disobedience held; and

12 Whereas, Dr. King traveled across the country recruiting demonstrators for
13 the campaign, but his efforts were tragically halted when he was assassinated on April
14 4, 1968; and

15 Whereas, to honor Dr. King, plans were made to proceed with the campaign;
16 and

17 Whereas, thousands of demonstrators participated in the Poor People's March
18 on May 12, 1968; and

19 Whereas, demonstrators set up a camp, known as Resurrection City, on the
20 Washington Mall in Washington, DC; and

21 Whereas, the demonstrators lobbied Congress and other governmental
22 agencies calling for an "economic bill of rights"; and

23 Whereas, simultaneous demonstrations were held throughout the country in
24 support of the campaign; and

25 Whereas, after several weeks, the Poor People's Campaign lost momentum
26 and closed camp on June 19, 1968; and

27 Whereas, despite the efforts of the Poor People's Campaign, poverty
28 continues to be a way of life for many American citizens; and

1 Whereas, according to the United States Census Bureau, an estimated 25
2 million people were living below the federal poverty level in 1968 and an estimated 36
3 million people or more were living below the federal poverty level in 2006; and

4 Whereas, a recent survey by the Census Bureau estimated that the lowest
5 wealth counties in North Carolina were Robeson, Halifax, Tyrrell, Columbus, Scotland,
6 Edgecombe, Warren, Northampton, Bladen, and Washington Counties; and

7 Whereas, the North Carolina Department of Commerce recently ranked
8 Tyrrell, Hyde, Washington, Gates, Alleghany, Warren, Greene, Clay, Caldwell, and
9 Bertie Counties as the most economically distressed among the 41 designated Tier 1
10 counties in the State; and

11 Whereas, generally Tier 1 counties have higher unemployment rates, lower
12 wages, and greater percentages of people living in poverty; and

13 Whereas, on the 40th anniversary of the Poor People's Campaign it is fitting to
14 recognize the significance of the movement and to honor Dr. King and the many others
15 who helped to bring awareness of the economic conditions of many Americans living in
16 this country; Now, therefore,

17 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

18 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly recognizes the fortieth anniversary of
19 the Poor People's Campaign and the significance of the movement.

20 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Dr. Martin
21 Luther King, Jr. for his contributions to the civil rights movement and the Poor People's
22 Campaign.

23 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.