

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. J. RES. 102

Recognizing that the Birmingham Pledge has made a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 14, 2000

Mr. BACHUS (for himself and Mr. HILLIARD) introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

JOINT RESOLUTION

Recognizing that the Birmingham Pledge has made a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world, and for other purposes.

Whereas Birmingham, Alabama, is an international symbol of the racial strife in the United States in the 1950's and 1960's;

Whereas out of the crucible of Birmingham's role in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, a present-day grassroots movement, embodied in the Birmingham Pledge, has arisen to continue the effort to eliminate racial and ethnic divisions in the United States and around the world;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, authored by Birmingham attorney James E. Rotch, sponsored by the Community Affairs Committee of Operation New Birmingham, and promoted by a broad cross-section of the community, increases racial harmony by helping individuals communicate in a positive way concerning the Nation's diversity and by encouraging people to make a commitment to racial harmony;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, signed by individuals as evidence of their commitment to its message, reads as follows:

“I believe that every person has worth as an individual.

“I believe that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or color.

“I believe that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is in my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

“Therefore, from this day forward I will strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

“I will discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

“I will treat all people with dignity and respect; and I will strive to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.”;

Whereas more than 70,000 people have signed the Birmingham Pledge, including the President, Members of the Congress, State Governors, State legislators, mayors, county commissioners, city council members, and other people around the world;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge has achieved national and international recognition;

Whereas efforts to obtain signatories to the Birmingham Pledge are being organized and conducted in communities around the world;

Whereas every Birmingham Pledge signed and returned to Birmingham is recorded at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute as a permanent testament to racial reconciliation, peace, and harmony; and

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, the motto for which is “Sign It, Live It”, is a powerful tool to facilitate dialogue on the Nation’s diversity and the need for people to take personal steps to achieve racial harmony and tolerance in communities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
 2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
 3 That—

4 (1) the Congress—

5 (A) recognizes that the pledge popularly
 6 known as the Birmingham Pledge has made a
 7 significant contribution in fostering racial har-
 8 mony and reconciliation in the United States
 9 and around the world; and

10 (B) commends the people involved with the
 11 creation of the Birmingham Pledge and sig-
 12 natories to the pledge for the steps they are
 13 taking to make the Nation and the world a bet-
 14 ter place for all people; and

1 (2) it is the sense of the Congress that a Na-
2 tional Birmingham Pledge Week should be estab-
3 lished.

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