



HR0615

LRB101 15369 MST 64575 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of former U.S. Representative John James Conyers Jr.; and

3

4

5

WHEREAS, Rep. Conyers was born in Highland Park, Michigan on May 16, 1929 and grew up in Detroit; he attended Wayne State University, where he received both his undergraduate and law degrees; he served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War as part of a unit of African-American combat engineers; and

6

7

8

9

10

WHEREAS, Rep. Conyers became a civil rights activist and took part in the voting rights efforts in Selma, Alabama in 1963; he also served as an aide to U.S. Rep. John Dingell; and

11

12

13

WHEREAS, Rep. Conyers made his first run for Congress after Michigan's congressional districts had been redrawn after a 1962 Supreme Court decision that made it unconstitutional to draw districts in a way that under-represents minority voters; one of his early supporters in his 1964 campaign was Rosa Parks; he hired her after the election, and she remained on his staff until she retired in 1988; and

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

WHEREAS, Rep. Conyers was consistently a progressive voice; he supported such liberal causes as gun control,

21

1 anti-poverty programs, and universal health care; he held
2 hearings to spotlight police misconduct and also supported
3 legislation urging a study of the possibility of offering
4 reparations to the descendants of slaves; and

5 WHEREAS, Just days after the 1968 assassination of the Rev.
6 Martin Luther King Jr., Rep. Conyers introduced a resolution
7 calling for a national holiday in his name, which took 15 years
8 to come to fruition; and

9 WHEREAS, Rep. Conyers retired on December 5, 2017; his
10 service in Congress spanned 10 presidencies and 52 years; he
11 was in the U.S. House of Representatives for over one-fifth of
12 the entire existence of the U.S. Congress; in 1964, he went to
13 Jim Crow Mississippi during Freedom Summer and offered legal
14 representation to black voting-rights activists, and one year
15 later, he was in Congress supporting the Voting Rights Act as a
16 member of the U.S. House of Representatives; and

17 WHEREAS, Rep. Conyers was the only congressman ever
18 endorsed by Martin Luther King Jr.; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
20 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
21 we mourn the passing of former U.S. Representative John Conyers
22 and extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and

1 all who knew and loved him; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
3 presented to the family of Rep. Conyers as an expression of our
4 deepest sympathy.