

2023-J2197

Senate Resolution No. 2197

BY: Senator COMRIE

COMMEMORATING the 60th Anniversary of the tragic murders of civil rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner

WHEREAS, June 21, 2024, marks the 60th Anniversary of the tragic murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner; the trio were members of the Congress of Racial Equity (CORE) who traveled to Mississippi during Freedom Summer in 1964 to investigate a church bombing and to help Black citizens register to vote; and

WHEREAS, The day after arriving in Mississippi, on June 21, 1964, they were kidnapped and brutally murdered by Ku Klux Klan members; their bodies were found 44 days later buried in an earthen dam; it took 41 years to bring the main perpetrator, Edgar Ray Killen, to justice; and

WHEREAS, The murders of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner shook the conscience of the nation; their tragic deaths brought light to the mainstream public about voting inequities in the Nation and helped to usher in the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, Family members of the three civil rights activists, Julia Chaney-Moss (James' sister), Stephen A. Schwerner (Michael's brother) and David Goodman (Andrew's brother) have continued their respective siblings' fight for civil rights in the decades that followed; and

WHEREAS, David Goodman has managed the Andrew Goodman Foundation, a not-for-profit organization he created along with Andrew's parents which supports youth leadership development, voting accessibility, and social justice initiatives on campuses across the country; Stephen A. Schwerner has marched against segregation, was a draft counselor during the Vietnam War, and taught classes on the civil rights movement; and Julia Chaney-Moss has continued to honor her brother's memory through sustained advocacy on civil rights issues and her work through the ministry; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Summer civil rights workers have historic connections to Queens College and New York City; Andrew Goodman was a student at Queens College at the time of his passing and Stephen A. Schwerner, Michael's brother, was director of counseling at Queens College for many years and chair of the academic senate; and

WHEREAS, Queens College President Frank H. Wu is presenting President's Medals, the college's highest administrative honor, on Thursday, May 30, 2024, at the college's 100th Commencement to Julia Chaney-Moss, David Goodman, and Stephen A. Schwerner; and

WHEREAS, The legacy of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner encourages all eligible voters to register and participate in the electoral process, in tribute to all who gave their lives in support of voter rights, and offers deepest gratitude and appreciation to David Goodman, Stephen A. Schwerner, and Julia Chaney-Moss for their lifelong commitment to civil rights and enfranchisement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the tragic murders of civil rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner; and be it

further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the families of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.