

2013-K719

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 2, 2013, as Medgar Wiley Evers Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals of remarkable courage and strength of character who risked their own lives for others, and stood with fortitude for freedom and humanity; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound conviction that this Legislative Body is moved to honor a man of indomitable faith and dedication whose purposeful life and accomplishments will forever stand as an example and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 2, 2013, as Medgar Wiley Evers Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Wiley Evers was field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); his assassination in June 1963, sparked a national outcry that increased support for legislation that ultimately became the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, Civil rights leader Medgar Wiley Evers was born on July 2, 1925, in Decatur, Mississippi, where he daily witnessed and experienced the horrors of discrimination and racism from an early age; his father, James Evers, owned his own land and served as a model of independence and courage for the future organizer who grew up determined to resist oppression; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Evers served in the United States Army during World War II, fighting in both France and Germany; after being honorably discharged in 1946, he returned to Decatur, and took on his first direct challenge to discrimination by attempting to vote in the next election;

thwarted in his efforts by an armed crowd of approximately 200 racists, he joined the NAACP and quickly rose to prominence in Mississippi; and WHEREAS, Medgar Evers consistently sought to promote understanding and equality between blacks and whites, and of the need to overcome racial hatred; he organized voter-registration drives, economic boycotts and demonstrations to end segregation and worked tirelessly to support the efforts of his fellow civil rights advocates; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Evers also fought racial injustices in education, as well as in state and local legal systems; he worked with famed civil rights attorney and future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to desegregate the University of Mississippi Law School, called for a new investigation into the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till, and protested the conviction of fellow Mississippi civil rights activists; these activities made him a prime target for those who opposed racial equality; and

WHEREAS, On the night of June 12, 1963, 38-year-old Medgar Evers had just returned home from a series of NAACP functions when he was shot in the back; he died in a hospital shortly thereafter, leaving behind his wife, Myrlie Evers, and their three children; and

WHEREAS, Although African-Americans were routinely murdered for resisting oppression, Medgar Evers was the first major civil rights leader to be assassinated; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Wiley Evers' death was a milestone in the African-American civil rights movement, spurring civil rights leaders and advocates to work all the more towards the goal of freedom, inspiring new advocates, and enlightening and motivating the President and Congress to take decisive action to protect the rights of African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Since his passing, Medgar Wiley Evers' immeasurable contributions to the cause of freedom have been honored in many ways; he was

buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington DC, and posthumously awarded the NAACP Spingarn Medal in 1963; in 1969 the City University of New York named a college in his honor and,

in 2009, the United States Navy bestowed his name on one of their vessels; and

WHEREAS, The sacrifice of Medgar Wiley Evers helped to open the doors of freedom for millions of Americans; his life was a study in courage and conviction, a model of hope and belief in the highest possible ideals to which all should aspire; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and inspired by the spirit of justice, Medgar Wiley Evers has left behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 2, 2013, as Medgar Wiley Evers Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.