

BY: Senator STEWART-COUSINS

MOURNING the death of U.S. Representative John R. Lewis, civil rights leader and icon of American history

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay homage to a man of indomitable faith and dedication whose purposeful life and accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, With feelings of deepest regret, this Legislative Body records the passing of John Robert Lewis who died on Friday, July 17, 2020, at the age of 80; he served in the United States House of Representatives for Georgia's 5th congressional district from 1987 until his death; and

WHEREAS, Born on February 21, 1940, in Troy, Alabama, the third of 10 children of sharecroppers Willie Mae and Eddie Lewis, John R. Lewis graduated from the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, before receiving a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy from Fisk University; and

WHEREAS, While studying at Fisk University, John R. Lewis became involved in the civil rights movement by organizing sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, bus boycotts, and other non-violent protests as part of the Nashville Student Movement; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated to the movement, John R. Lewis was one of the original 13 Freedom Riders who rode on public transportation from Washington, DC to New Orleans in an integrated fashion and was arrested many times, beaten and imprisoned; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, as Chairman of the of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), John R. Lewis was one of the primary organizers of the March on Washington and spoke at the March; and

WHEREAS, Known as the "conscious of Congress", John R. Lewis was one of the most liberal congressmen to represent a Deep South district, and over the course of 17 elections, he only once got less than 70 percent of the vote when he received 69 percent in 1994; and

WHEREAS, Congressman John R. Lewis was Senior Chief Deputy Whip and served on the Committee on Ways and Means; among the successful legislation he sponsored was the bill establishing the National Museum of African American History and Culture; and

WHEREAS, John R. Lewis spent his whole adult life fighting racism; he was awarded over 50 honorary degrees from prestigious colleges and universities throughout the United States, including Harvard University, Brown University, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Duke University, Morehouse College, Clark-Atlanta University, Howard

University, Brandeis University, Columbia University, Fisk University, and Troy State University; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, in 2011, President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor; and

WHEREAS, John R. Lewis was a stalwart champion in the on-going struggle to demand respect for the dignity and worth of every human being; he dedicated his entire life to non-violent activism and was an outspoken advocate in the struggle for equal justice in America; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to give acclaim to individuals of great character whose lives exemplify the highest ideals of humanity; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his wife of 44 years, Lillian Miles Lewis, John R. Lewis is survived by his son, John-Miles Lewis; and six siblings; as well as approximately 30 nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, In appreciation of his life of commitment, dedication and substantial contribution, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to inscribe upon its records this tribute to the memory of Congressman John R. Lewis that future generations may know and appreciate his admirable character, his many benevolent deeds, and the respect and esteem in which he was held; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of U.S. Representative John R. Lewis, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of U.S. Representative John R. Lewis.