Legislation Text

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Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the civil rights marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama to Montgomery on March 7, 1965, also known as “Bloody Sunday”.

WHEREAS, On March 7, 1965, a group of peaceful demonstrators, led by Reverend Hosea Williams of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and other civil rights activists marched from Selma, Alabama towards Montgomery, Alabama across the Edmund Pettus bridge; and

WHEREAS, The activists on the bridge were protesting the denial of voting rights to African Americans and the murder of activist Jimmie Lee Jackson who was fatally shot in the stomach by law enforcement during a peaceful protest a few days before the march; and

WHEREAS; This group of over 600 nonviolent protestors were violently attacked by state deputies and troopers as they crossed over the Edmund Pettus Bridge, who beat unarmed marchers with billy clubs and sprayed them with tear gas; and

WHEREAS, This event became known as “Bloody Sunday”, a name that evokes the horrifying images of violence used against the civil rights activists at the hands of Alabama state deputies and troopers, and captures the brutality of the struggle for African-American voting rights; and

WHEREAS, Television cameras captured the entire assault, and footage of the violence collectively shocked the nation and further galvanized the fight for civil rights. Outrage at the event led to sit-ins, subsequent marches, and ultimately the passage of the Voting Rights Act, which was signed into law on August 6, 1965; and

WHEREAS, March 2025 marks the 60th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday. This grim anniversary serves as a reminder of the violence of the civil rights struggle as well as the collective power of nonviolent protest; and

WHEREAS, On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, we remember those who were assaulted on the bridge and those who continued the fight for civil rights in the 1960s until today. In commemoration of the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, we recommit to the fight for civil rights, including voting rights and racial justice, in across the country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHA, Hereby commemorates the 60th Anniversary of the civil rights marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama to Montgomery on March 7, 1965, also known as “Bloody Sunday”.