SENATE RESOLUTION

8630

By Senators Nelson, Angel, Bailey, Baumgartner, Becker, Benton, Billig, Braun, Brown, Chase, Cleveland, Conway, Dammeier, Dansel, Darneille, Ericksen, Fain, Fraser, Frockt, Habib, Hargrove, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hill, Hobbs, Honeyford, Jayapal, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Liias, Litzow, McAuliffe, McCoy, Miloscia, Mullet, O'Ban, Padden, Parlette, Pearson, Pedersen, Ranker, Rivers, Roach, Rolfes, Schoesler, Sheldon, and Warnick

WHEREAS, Today we join with the people of the State of Washington and throughout our nation to honor the 50th anniversary of the historic march led by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his courageous followers in Selma, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, only two percent of Selma's eligible black voters were able to register as a result of efforts to prevent voter registration; and

WHEREAS, On February 18, 1965, white segregationists attacked a group of peaceful demonstrators and killed Jimmie Lee Jackson, a young black demonstrator, and in response to Jackson's death, Dr. King and his followers made three attempts to march from Selma to Montgomery, 54 miles away; and

WHEREAS, The first march took place on March 7, 1965, without Dr. King, and was met with violent resistance from Alabama authorities who subjected 600 defenseless marchers to attacks from whips, nightsticks, and tear gas; and

WHEREAS, After a second attempt to march was blocked by Alabama authorities, President Lyndon B. Johnson pledged his support for the marchers, and lobbied for passage of new voting rights laws in Congress; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 2,000 people set out on a third march from Selma on March 21, 1965, protected by the United States Army and the Alabama National Guard, and after walking for 12 hours a day, the group arrived in Montgomery on March 25, 1965, and were met by 50,000 black and white supporters; and

WHEREAS, These historic marches raised awareness of the difficulties faced by African Americans in the South; and

WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act passed through Congress as a direct result of the marches in Selma, and remains one of the most impactful pieces of civil rights legislation in American history; and

WHEREAS, The marches led by Dr. King were a landmark achievement of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement, and another prominent example of Dr. King achieving change by nonviolent means;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate honor the 50th anniversary of the final march in Selma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate, on behalf of the people of our state, recognize the importance of the marches at Selma, and reflect on the blood and tears shed to secure civil rights and freedoms for every American.