House Concurrent Resolution

A concurrent resolution acknowledging the injustices perpetrated against the targets of the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee between 1956 and 1965, and offering a formal and heartfelt apology to those whose lives, well-being, and livelihoods were damaged or destroyed by the activities and public pronouncements of those who served on the committee.

WHEREAS, following the special session of the Florida Legislature in July 1956, the act establishing the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (FLIC) became law, and

WHEREAS, following its establishment, the committee, in conjunction with Tallahassee police, surveilled, harassed, intimidated, and arrested members of the Inter-Civic Council, students from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and other participants in the bus boycott and carpool network that began in May 1956 and continued until December 1956, and

WHEREAS, on February 1, 1957, the FLIC held its first public hearings, questioning Virgil Hawkins, an African-American man who had been trying to enter the University of Florida law school since 1949, as well as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attorneys Francisco Rodriguez and Horace Hill, claiming that the NAACP was violating the law by soliciting plaintiffs for desegregation lawsuits, and
WHEREAS, on February 25, 1957, the committee began public hearings in Miami, demanding that the local NAACP branch surrender all records, including membership lists, and claiming that the branch had been infiltrated by current and former communists, and

WHEREAS, the committee devoted the years of 1957 and 1958 to besmirching NAACP members as criminals and communist sympathizers in order to slow or halt their efforts to desegregate Florida schools and public spaces, and

WHEREAS, in November and December of 1958, the chief investigator of the FLIC began an inquiry into alleged homosexual activity by faculty, staff, and students at the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville; allowed officers of the UF police department to entrap and question without legal counsel those suspected of such activity; and threatened and coerced those individuals with a public hearing or perjury charges into confessing and identifying others as alleged homosexuals, and

WHEREAS, the committee continued the UF and Gainesville investigations into 1959, having entrapped and intimidated dozens of individuals on and off campus, interrogating them in motel rooms and basements, resulting in the firing of 14 faculty and staff at UF, and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1959 the committee reported to the Florida Legislature that homosexual professors were
recruiting students into "homosexual practices" and they in turn
were becoming teachers in Florida's public school system and
recruiting even younger students, and

WHEREAS, the committee began 4 years of statewide
investigations into alleged homosexual activity by public school
teachers, administrators, and students, working with local law
enforcement and employing the same tactics used at the
University of Florida, and cooperating with the Florida Board of
Education to revoke individuals' teaching certificates, and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1961, the committee began an
inquiry into alleged homosexual activity, liberal teaching
methods, curricula, and policies at the University of South
Florida (USF) in Tampa, and

WHEREAS, the FLIC investigator and attorney, together with
local law enforcement, questioned USF faculty, staff, and
students in a motel room without appropriate legal counsel, and
gathered information about the allegedly anti-Christian, pro-
integration, and pro-communist slant of reading assignments,
classroom lectures, and invited campus speakers, and

WHEREAS, the committee held public hearings to question USF
faculty and administrators about the content of their courses,
and policies related to hiring faculty and inviting speakers in
an effort to discredit them as atheists, integrationists, and
communist sympathizers, damaging individuals' careers and the
state's national standing in higher education, and
WHEREAS, in 1964 and 1965, the committee published misleading and inflammatory reports about homosexuals and civil rights activists in Florida, drawing continued unfavorable national attention and perpetuating falsehoods against citizens of the state, and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee spent 9 years at the expense of the taxpayers of the state using unconstitutional and unjust methods to discredit and combat legal, peaceful desegregation efforts; to destroy or otherwise jeopardize the livelihoods and reputations of educators, administrators, and other professionals in Florida's public schools and universities; and to create a climate of fear that caused pain and suffering among vulnerable citizens and made Florida a national symbol of intolerance, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Florida, the Senate Concurring:

That the Legislature acknowledges the injustices perpetrated against the targets of the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee between 1956 and 1965, and offers a formal and heartfelt apology to those whose lives, well-being, and livelihoods were damaged or destroyed by the activities and public pronouncements of those who served on the committee.