

1 House Concurrent Resolution

2 A concurrent resolution acknowledging the injustices
3 perpetrated against the targets of the Florida
4 Legislative Investigation Committee between 1956 and
5 1965, and offering a formal and heartfelt apology to
6 those whose lives, well-being, and livelihoods were
7 damaged or destroyed by the activities and public
8 pronouncements of those who served on the committee.
9

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

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

19 WHEREAS, on February 1, 1957, the FLIC held its first
20 public hearings, questioning Virgil Hawkins, an African-American
21 man who had been trying to enter the University of Florida law
22 school since 1949, as well as National Association for the
23 Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attorneys Francisco
24 Rodriguez and Horace Hill, claiming that the NAACP was violating
25 the law by soliciting plaintiffs for desegregation lawsuits, and

26 WHEREAS, on February 25, 1957, the committee began public
27 hearings in Miami, demanding that the local NAACP branch
28 surrender all records, including membership lists, and claiming
29 that the branch had been infiltrated by current and former
30 communists, and

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

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

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

49 WHEREAS, in the spring of 1959 the committee reported to
50 the Florida Legislature that homosexual professors were

51 recruiting students into "homosexual practices" and they in turn
 52 were becoming teachers in Florida's public school system and
 53 recruiting even younger students, and

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

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

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

70 WHEREAS, the committee held public hearings to question USF
 71 faculty and administrators about the content of their courses,
 72 and policies related to hiring faculty and inviting speakers in
 73 an effort to discredit them as atheists, integrationists, and
 74 communist sympathizers, damaging individuals' careers and the
 75 state's national standing in higher education, and

76 WHEREAS, in 1964 and 1965, the committee published
77 misleading and inflammatory reports about homosexuals and civil
78 rights activists in Florida, drawing continued unfavorable
79 national attention and perpetuating falsehoods against citizens
80 of the state, and

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

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

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