

2014 JUN 12 AM 10:06 RESOLUTION No. _____ C.M.S.

Introduced by Councilmembers: Lynette- Gibson- McElheny, Dan Kalb
And Rebecca Kaplan

**A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE WEEK OF JUNE 22ND 2014 AS
"GOODMAN, CHANEY, SCHWERNER MEMORIAL VOTING RIGHTS WEEK"
AND RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR
ASSASSINATIONS AND SUPPORTING CONTINUED EXPANSION OF VOTER
ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

WHEREAS although the 15th and 19th Amendments to the Constitution gave black men and women the right to vote, African Americans in the South faced overwhelming challenges in registering to vote and voting in the Century following Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS such barriers to voting rights for African Americans included poll taxes, literacy tests, physical threats, violence, harassment, and economic ramifications; and

WHEREAS these barriers limited political power for African Americans as well as caused low voter registration rates for African Americans, for example in 1960, in the State of Mississippi, only five percent of eligible blacks were registered to vote.

WHEREAS three American civil rights' workers, James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael "Mickey" Schwerner, participated in the "Freedom Summer" campaign which strived to register African Americans to vote in the State of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, after a leading voter registration campaign and visiting the site of a burned Black church, Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were shot at close range on the night of June 21, 1964 by members of the Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Philadelphia, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi refused to prosecute the crimes and when the Federal Government intervened to lead its own investigation, it only found seven men guilty conspiracy and never charged any of the perpetrators with murder; and

WHEREAS, the outrage over their murders assisted in the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS the Voting Rights Act aided in the dramatic increase of voter registration rates for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, by 1968, sixty percent of eligible African Americans in the State of Mississippi were registered to vote; and

WHEREAS mechanisms of disenfranchisement continue to exist, in more sophisticated, but equally oppressive ways,

WHEREAS a nonviolent offense brands someone a felon and strips them of their voting rights, sometimes for the rest of their lives,

WHEREAS the disenfranchised felon population consist of five to six million Americans,

WHEREAS felony convictions restrict 13 percent of the country's black male population from voting

WHEREAS felon disenfranchisement is an heir to the voter-suppression tactics of the Jim Crow era.

WHEREAS further erosion of the voting power of minorities occurs through redistricting,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Oakland City Council continues in its commitment to fully engage and ensure our residents have full participation and representation in the electoral process; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Oakland urges our Federal representatives to take all available action to restore and expand protection of voting rights for all; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge all city public contact locations to make voter registration cards readily available to the public; and

FURTHER REWOLVED we, the undersigned , do hereby proclaim the week of June 15th 2014 as "Goodman, Chaney, Schwerner Memorial Voting Rights Week" in recognition the 50th anniversary of their assassinations and supporting continued expansion of voter access and participation.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, _____

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES – BROOKS, GALLO, GIBSON MCELHANEY, KALB, KAPLAN, REID, SCHAAF and PRESIDENT KERNIGHAN

NOES -
ABSENT -
ABSTENTION -

ATTEST: _____

LaTonda Simmons
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California