

**SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 955**

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides of 1961 and to welcome Robert Farrell, a participant in those historic efforts, which played a key role in the struggle for racial equality in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, In May of 1961, an interracial group of bus riders set out to test the new law that forbade segregation in interstate transportation; organized by the Congress of Racial Equality and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, these riders employed the strategy of nonviolence to draw attention to the multiple injustices of segregation; and

**WHEREAS**, The rides began in Washington, D.C., where two teams of riders boarded buses to travel to New Orleans, with their route taking them through the deep South and exposing them to the threat of violent reprisals; the start of the trip went well, and the group was welcomed in Atlanta by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; later along the route, however, the buses were attacked and riders were beaten by crowds; and

**WHEREAS**, The Freedom Riders' refusal to be intimidated, their steadfast and righteous defiance, and their brave commitment to their mission helped bring about the nationwide public realization that integration was a moral imperative while also inspiring the immediate and direct support of hundreds of young people, both black and white, who came from across the country to join them; and

**WHEREAS**, In August of that same year, another group of riders, including Robert Farrell, set forth from Los Angeles by train to further the cause of helping our nation implement the ideals of its founding; these riders were arrested and jailed in Houston for nonviolently attempting to desegregate that city's Union Station Coffee Shop; and

**WHEREAS**, These struggles for equality brought to the forefront many young people whose experiences in the Freedom Rides inspired them to become leaders in the civil rights movement and in their communities; leaders such as Congressman John Lewis of Georgia and longtime Los Angeles Councilman Robert Farrell have served as an inspiration to generations of activists working to effect societal change; and

**WHEREAS**, The Freedom Rides played a vital role in bringing attention to the inequities faced by African Americans in this country; it is truly fitting that they be recognized as a vital part of our shared history on the occasion of their 50th anniversary; now, therefore, be it

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**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd Legislature, hereby commend the Freedom Riders on their courage and their dedication to equal rights and call on all Texans to recognize their historic contributions to bringing our nation closer to its principles and ideals; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared in honor of this significant occasion in our nation's history.

Ellis, West

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 10, 2011.

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Secretary of the Senate

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Member, Texas Senate

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Member, Texas Senate