

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 134

Senators Geiss, Shink, McMorrow, McDonald Rivet, Camilleri, McCann, Cavanagh, Singh, Hertel, Cherry, Irwin, Chang, Bayer, Wojno, Anthony, Klinefelt, Damoose and Santana offered the following resolution:

1           A resolution to recognize the 60th anniversary of Freedom  
2 Summer.

3           Whereas, In the early 1960s, Mississippi was the most brutally  
4 segregated state in the country, having the lowest per capita and  
5 family income of any state, with huge gaps between white and black  
6 family incomes and education levels; and

7           Whereas, Many civil rights activists in Mississippi were  
8 beaten, shot, and murdered, including Medgar Evers; and

9           Whereas, African Americans were effectively barred from

1 holding any elected office, serving on juries, and from registering  
2 or voting without facing possible violence; and

3       Whereas, Mississippi was effectively a one-party state,  
4 controlled by the Democratic party, which barred African Americans  
5 from membership; and

6       Whereas, The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the  
7 Congress of Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership  
8 Council, and the National Association for the Advancement of  
9 Colored People (NAACP) came together in 1962 to form the Council of  
10 Federated Organizations (COFO) with the purpose of challenging  
11 segregation and exposing the violent culture that subjugated  
12 African Americans; and

13       Whereas, In the summer of 1964, COFO made a strategic decision  
14 to campaign and bring volunteers from all over the country to  
15 Mississippi to register Black voters, create Freedom Schools,  
16 establish libraries, and support the efforts of the Mississippi  
17 Freedom Democratic Party to build an integrated political party to  
18 challenge the racist policies that barred non-whites from having a  
19 voice in state and local government; and

20       Whereas, COFO made another strategic decision to have almost  
21 all of the out-of-state volunteers be white in order to draw  
22 national attention to the brutality and corruption that dominated  
23 Mississippi; and

24       Whereas, These volunteers included over 75 Michiganders, 1,000  
25 student volunteers from northern colleges and universities, 254  
26 clergy, 169 attorneys, and 50 medical professionals, as well as a  
27 staff of over 120 Mississippi residents. All volunteers recognized  
28 that they would be facing violent resistance; and

29       Whereas, During the Freedom Summer, two student volunteers and

1 four Mississippi residents were murdered; and

2       Whereas, In addition, 80 volunteers were brutally beaten, 37  
3 churches were firebombed or burned, and at least 30 Black homes and  
4 businesses were destroyed; and

5       Whereas, Less than 10 percent of the 17,000 African American  
6 voters who attempted to register to vote were successful; and

7       Whereas, Freedom Schools in rural counties were attended by  
8 30,000 students and over 50 Freedom libraries were established,  
9 providing adult literacy classes; and

10       Whereas, In an election held by the Mississippi Freedom  
11 Democratic Party, 60,000 state residents voted to select an  
12 integrated slate of delegates to challenge the segregated state  
13 party delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention held in  
14 Atlantic City; and

15       Whereas, While Michigan has long been a national leader in  
16 voter registration, election turnout, and election security, the  
17 fight to secure the right to vote continues to be an ongoing  
18 struggle in many other parts of the country; and

19       Whereas, We recognize and honor the Michigan residents who  
20 risked their own personal safety to join the 1,500 volunteers  
21 during the 1964 Freedom Summer; now, therefore, be it

22       Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative  
23 body recognize the 60th anniversary of Freedom Summer. The right of  
24 any citizen to vote in local, state, or national elections is  
25 essential to the vitality of our democracy.