

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-17-42

A RESOLUTION URGING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO GRANT A POSTHUMOUS PARDON TO CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST MARCUS M. GARVEY, JR.

WHEREAS, Marcus M. Garvey, Jr. was born August 17, 1887 in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica;

WHEREAS, Garvey traveled internationally documenting the exploitation of migrant workers on plantations and published them in the *African Times and Orient Review*;

WHEREAS, inspired by what he saw, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Jamaica in 1912. The organization worked to promote pride among Blacks and repatriation of Blacks to Africa and at its peak had over 1,900 chapters in 40 countries;

WHEREAS, Garvey was a proponent of the Black Nationalism and Pan-African movement, and whose philosophies led to the development of "Garveyism;"

WHEREAS, Garveyism, "centers on the unification and empowerment of African-American men, women and children under the banner of their collective African descent, and the repatriation of African slave descendants and profits to the African continent;"

WHEREAS, Garvey was motivated by his correspondence with Booker T. Washington, after he founded the Tuskegee Institute, to raise funds to create a similar school in Jamaica;

WHEREAS, Garvey settled in New York City and promoted social, political and economic freedom for Blacks separated from an integrated approach, and began publishing the *Negro World* newspaper to convey the message;

WHEREAS, Garvey founded the Black Star Line in 1919, a shipping company, that would facilitate trade between blacks in the Americas, the Caribbean, Canada and Africa, and the Negro Factories Corporation to encourage black economic independence and provide products for sale in Western hemisphere and Africa;

WHEREAS, in what was considered by Garvey, a miscarriage of justice, Garvey and other officials of the UNIA were charged and convicted of mail fraud involving the Black Star Line, whereby was sentenced to prison for five years and deported to Jamaica in 1923;

WHEREAS, Garvey was unfairly targeted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and its director, J. Edgar Hoover, who led a specific campaign against Garvey;

WHEREAS, targeting of civil rights leaders by the FBI was an insidious practice that violated the rights of those convening to empower African Americans;

WHEREAS, Garvey died in London in 1940 but was able to influence those involved in the Pan-

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African movement who still refer to his work until this day;

WHEREAS, Garvey has several memorials in Jamaica, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, England and across the United States honoring his contributions;

WHEREAS, a petition campaign was launched by the Garvey family in 2016 to get a posthumous pardon from President Barack Obama but was unsuccessful in its efforts;

WHEREAS, Jamaica is currently taking steps to expunge Garvey's criminal record, after providing him with a royal pardon in 1984 for his conviction for contempt of court; and

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) believes that those wrongfully convicted of crimes should be cleared even after their death.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) calls for a presidential pardon for Marcus M. Garvey;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NBCSL urges states to recognize the value of the work done by Marcus M. Garvey by bringing a raised consciousness and commitment to Black unity throughout the world; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NBCSL send a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of Congress, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Reginald Meeks (KY)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Law, Justice, and Ethics Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative Reginald Meeks (KY)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2016

Ratification is certified by: Senator Catherine Pugh (MD), President