



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 967 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Hansen Clarke  
Committee: Local, Urban and State Affairs

Date Completed: 2-16-10

### **RATIONALE**

On August 7, 1904, Ralph Bunche was born in Detroit, Michigan. He is known for his involvement with the civil rights movement and the United Nations, where his negotiation of armistice agreements between Israel and several Arab states made him the first African American to earn the Nobel Peace Prize. It has been suggested that August 7 of each year should be designated Dr. Ralph Bunche Day in Michigan.

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would create a new act to designate August 7 of each year "Dr. Ralph Bunche Day".**

The bill states, "The legislature recognizes the outstanding contributions to American and world history made by Dr. Ralph Bunche, a man who was an accomplished scholar, a distinguished diplomat, and a supporter of civil rights for people throughout the world. He was instrumental in the formation of the United Nations. In 1949, as the acting chief mediator in Palestine for the United Nations, Dr. Ralph Bunche successfully brokered a series of armistice agreements between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. For his work in negotiating these armistice agreements, Dr. Ralph Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. He was the first African American to receive the Nobel Prize. In 1963, Dr. Ralph Bunche received the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award, from President John F. Kennedy. In recognition of this great man, the legislature declares that August 7 of each year shall be known as 'Dr. Ralph Bunche Day'."

### **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

#### **Supporting Argument**

Ralph Bunche distinguished himself at an early age through his academic and athletic accomplishments, attending college on an athletic scholarship and achieving the position of valedictorian of his high school and college graduating classes. He earned his doctorate from Harvard in 1934. Throughout his adult life, he was involved with academia, teaching at Howard University and serving on the boards of various institutions.

Dr. Bunche, the grandson of a slave, also was active in the civil rights movement. He wrote *A World View of Race*, served as a consultant on minority issues to the Roosevelt administration, participated in marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and served for 22 years as a member of the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In addition to serving in an advisory role in the U.S. Department of State, Dr. Bunche dedicated many years to the United Nations (UN). He was named acting UN mediator on Palestine, and brokered armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states after months of negotiating. In 1950, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy presented him with the Medal of Freedom. Dr. Bunche continued to serve the UN in various capacities until 1971, the year of his death.

Dr. Bunche's extraordinary contributions to world peace efforts should not be forgotten. It would be fitting for his birthday to be designated a day of remembrance and recognition of the legacy of this notable Michigander.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: David Zin

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.