

Substitute for House Resolution No. 278.

A resolution to commemorate the life of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and the indelible impact he had on the state of Michigan, the United States of America, and the entire world community.

Whereas, Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918 in Mveso, Transkei, South Africa, and educated at Wesleyan College, University College of Fort Hare, University of London and the University of Witwatersrand at Johannesburg; and

Whereas, Nelson Mandela became actively involved in the anti-apartheid movement and joined the African National Congress in 1944, spending the next 20 years organizing nonviolent acts against the racist policies of the South African government; and

Whereas, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 for political offenses and sent to Robben Island for 18 years and then transferred to Pollsmoor Prison in 1982; and

Whereas, The world community watched as the events unfolded in South Africa and students on college campuses across the United States marched in protest to urge their schools to divest from investment in South Africa; and

Whereas, David Wiley, who directed Michigan State University's African Studies Center, stated, "Michigan responded to Mandela's challenge to support democracy and freedom in South Africa and perhaps in more depth than other states and other universities did. There was no other state that passed three bills of sanction from 1982 to 1986."; and

Whereas, Michigan State University was the first public university in the country to divest its interests from South Africa and the State of Michigan was the first state to do so; and

Whereas, Former Michigan Congressman Howard Wolpe played a pivotal role in ensuring that the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act, which required that Mandela be released from prison and imposed sanctions became law; and

Whereas, Steve McDonald, director of the Africa program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars stated that, "One of the first calls that Mandela made when he was finally released in 1990 was to Howard Wolpe to thank him for playing the role he did in passing the law."; and

Whereas, Upon his release after 27 years in prison, this gracious humble man willingly agreed to work with President F. W. de Klerk for the betterment of his country to peacefully rid it of apartheid and prepare the way for every adult to have the right to vote; and

Whereas, In 1991 Nelson Mandela was elected president of the African National Congress and he and President de Klerk were both awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for their tireless efforts in abolishing apartheid. South Africa proudly held its first democratic elections in April, 1994 and Nelson Mandela was inaugurated South Africa's first black president the following month at the age of 77; and

Whereas, The University of Michigan and Western Michigan University both awarded Nelson Mandela honorary degrees and Michigan State University presented him with an honorary doctor of laws degree; and

Whereas, Nelson Mandela spent his entire life dedicated to securing freedom, respect and human rights for all. This courageous quiet man gave the world its finest example of tolerance and reconciliation and has left a shining legacy of dignity, patience, and peace; and

Whereas, Nelson Mandela passed away in South Africa on December 5, 2013; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body commemorate the life of Nelson Mandela and the indelible impact he had on the state of Michigan, the United States of America and the entire world community.