RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREEDOM RIDERS

WHEREAS, in its 1960 decision in the case of Boynton v. Virginia, the United States Supreme Court held that racial segregation in bus-terminal facilities serving buses that crossed state lines was a violation of federal anti-discrimination laws; and

WHEREAS, in response to the Boynton decision, members of the Congress of Racial Equality ("CORE") and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee ("SNCC") organized the first Freedom Ride through the segregated southern United States to test the Supreme Court's ruling; and

WHEREAS, the first Freedom Riders -- led by James Farmer, the director of CORE -- left Washington, DC on May 4th, 1961, with 13 riders: 7 black and 6 white; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders planned to ride through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, sitting in interracial pairs, and conclude with a rally in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders were subjected to fire bombs, mob attacks, vicious beatings, and the threat of being lynched, particularly in Anniston, Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, despite the violence the Freedom Riders were subjected to, more Freedom Rides continued throughout the summer of 1961, many ending in Jackson, Mississippi, where the Riders were arrested and jailed; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of the Freedom Riders ultimately led to a decision by the federal Interstate Commerce Commission in September of 1961 to implement the Supreme Court's Boynton decision, thereby effectively banning segregation in bus-terminal facilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that, upon the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, the Board of Commissioners hereby recognizes the Freedom Riders whose bravery and efforts at social change paved the way for future generations and whose work continues to inspire today.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners hereby recognizes the sacrifice and commitment of the Freedom Riders and directs the Clerk to the Commission to spread this resolution upon the official minutes and record of the Board of Commissioners.

SO PASSED AND ADOPTED, this _____ day of June, 2011.

SPONSORED BY:

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Emma I. Darnell, Vice-Chair
District 5

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Robert L. "Robb" Pitts, Commissioner
District 2, At-Large

_____
William "Bill" Edwards, Commissioner
District 7

ATTEST:

_____
Mark Massey, Clerk to the Commission

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____
R. David Ware, County Attorney

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