

House Resolution No. 2594

97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES BUTLER (Sponsor), ROORDA, PACE, ELLINGTON,
SCHIEFFER AND WEBB (Co-sponsors).

2256L.011

2 **WHEREAS**, more than 30 years ago, the Hall of Famous Missourians was established
3 with the induction and installation of bronze busts of four famous Missourians: Samuel
4 Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) in 1982, George Washington Carver and Susan Elizabeth
5 Blow in 1983, and Thomas Hart Benton in 1985; and

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6 **WHEREAS**, since 1991, Speakers of the House of Representatives have raised money,
7 commissioned busts, and inducted an additional 37 Missourians into the Hall of Famous
8 Missourians; and

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10 **WHEREAS**, Roy Wilkins, born in St. Louis in 1901, was a prominent civil rights
11 activist in the United States from the 1930s to the 1970s; and

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13 **WHEREAS**, Wilkins began his career as a journalist, later becoming editor of *The*
14 *Appeal*, an African American newspaper, and *The Call*; and

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16 **WHEREAS**, in the 1930s, Wilkins was assistant secretary of the National Association
17 for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) under Walter Francis White. When W.E.B.
18 Dubois left the organization in 1934, Wilkins replaced him as editor of *The Crisis*, the official
19 magazine of the NAACP; and

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21 **WHEREAS**, in 1950, Wilkins was one of three men who founded the Leadership
22 Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), which became the premier civil rights coalition and
23 coordinated the national legislative campaign on behalf of every major civil rights law since
24 1957; and

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26 **WHEREAS**, in 1955, Roy Wilkins was chosen to be the executive secretary of the
27 NAACP and in 1964, became its executive director; and

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29 **WHEREAS**, Wilkins believed in achieving reform by legislative means, testifying before
30 many Congressional hearings and conferring with Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford,
31 and Carter. Wilkins strongly opposed militancy in the movement for civil rights as represented
32 by the "black power" movements, was a strong critic of racism in any form, regardless of its
33 creed, color, or political motivation, and espoused the principles of nonviolence; and

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35 **WHEREAS**, Roy Wilkins was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President
36 Lyndon Johnson and the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP; and

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38 **WHEREAS**, during his tenure with the NAACP, it played a pivotal role in leading the
39 nation into the civil rights movement and spearheaded the efforts that led to significant civil
40 rights victories, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the
41 Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

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43 **WHEREAS**, in 1977, Wilkins retired from the NAACP at the age of 76 and was honored
44 with the title "Director Emeritus of the NAACP"; and

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46 **WHEREAS**, 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act
47 of 1964. It is fitting and proper that Roy Wilkins, a man known as the "Senior Statesman" of the
48 United States Civil Rights Movement, be inducted into the Hall of Famous Missourians:

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50 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the members of the Missouri
51 House of Representatives, Ninety-seventh General Assembly, hereby urge the Speaker of the
52 House of Representatives to select Roy Wilkins, St. Louis native and prominent civil rights
53 activist, as a 2014 inductee into the Hall of Famous Missourians, in honor of the 50th
54 anniversary of the historic signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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