SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION
No. 86

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 29, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator BOB SMITH
District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)
Senator NIA H. GILL
District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senators Singleton and Pou

SYNOPSIS

Designates December 4 of each year as “Alpha Phi Alpha Day” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2021)

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating December 4 of each year as "Alpha Phi Alpha Day" in New Jersey.

WHEREAS, Since its founding on Tuesday, December 4, 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. has consistently supplied voice and vision to the struggle of African Americans and people of color around the world; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African American men, was founded on the campus of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, by seven college African-American men who recognized the need for a strong bond of brotherhood among African descendants in this country; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha initially served as a study and support group for African American students who faced racial prejudice, both educationally and socially, at Cornell University, but later became a fraternity and evolved into a service organization that has provided leadership and service opportunities for its members; and

WHEREAS, The visionary founders, known as the "Jewels" of the fraternity, are Henry Arthur Callis, Charles Henry Chapman, Eugene Kinckle Jones, George Biddle Kelley, Nathaniel Allison Murray, Robert Harold Ogle, and Vertner Woodson Tandy; and

WHEREAS, The Jewels and early leaders of the fraternity succeeded in laying a firm foundation for Alpha Phi Alpha's principles of scholarship, fellowship, good character, and the uplifting of humanity; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha has over 700 college and alumni chapters in the United States, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha's presence in New Jersey started with the founding of the Alpha Alpha Lambda alumni chapter in Newark in 1926 and further expanded with the first college chapter in New Jersey, the Delta Iota chapter at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, in 1950; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha develops leaders, and promotes brotherhood and academic excellence, while providing service and advocacy for our communities; and

WHEREAS, While advocating scholarship and excellence among its members, Alpha Phi Alpha also recognized the need to help correct the educational, economic, social, and political injustices faced by African Americans and developed programs to address those injustices; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha programs and charitable activities include a college readiness campaign ("Go-to-High-School, Go-to-College"), a voter registration and civic engagement campaign (A Voteless People is a Hopeless People), a sexual education and responsibility campaign (Project Alpha), and partnerships with the March of Dimes, Boy Scouts of America, and Big Brother and Big Sister of America; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha has long stood at the forefront of civil rights and social justice movements through its members, including but not limited to, Martin Luther King Jr., Adam Clayton Powell, Thurgood Marshall, Andrew Young, and Paul Robeson; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Phi Alpha continues to enrich the lives of its members, who, in turn, become change agents and leaders within our communities as evidenced by its members funding academic scholarships for college students and its members engaging in community service projects and initiatives throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper to designate a special day to commend Alpha Phi Alpha for its programs and activities that exemplify the importance of service to all mankind and to recognize the positive impact the fraternity continues to have throughout the world, including in the State of New Jersey; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. December 4 of each year is designated "Alpha Phi Alpha Day" in the State of New Jersey to commemorate the founding of the first Black intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity and to recognize the contributions and achievements of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and its members.

2. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue an annual proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe "Alpha Phi Alpha Day" with appropriate activities and programs.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This joint resolution designates December 4 of each year as "Alpha Phi Alpha Day" to commemorate the founding of the first Black intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity and to recognize the contributions and achievements of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and its members. Founded on December 4, 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha instills the values of leadership, scholarship, brotherhood, and community service. Today, the organization continues to enrich the lives of its members who in turn become agents of change both here in New Jersey and across the world. Given the extent to which Alpha Phi Alpha has, and will continue to be, a force for positive change, it is fitting and proper to designate a day in its honor.