

WHEREAS, in the fall of 1983, former Fresno City Councilmember Les Kimber, through Bill 195 and Ordinance 85-187, created the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Committee and declared the third Monday in January, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day making the city one of the first cities in the nation to observe Dr. King’s birthday as a holiday; and

WHEREAS, the first Unity Committee included Les Kimber, Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor, Dan Pessano, Karen Humphrey, Rev. Walt Perry, Mary Curry, Woody Miller, Dr. Joseph Sacks, Dr. Thomas Russell, Shirley Rowe, Art Dyson, Rev. Chester Riggins, Ernie Shelton, Dr. James Aldrege, Ben Benavidez, Jackie Church, Ruth Cooper, Lindell Cross, Rutherford Gaston, Dr. Robert S. Mikell, Ray Johnson, and various other community members; and

WHEREAS, the Unity Committee, tasked with organizing a community-wide celebration of Dr. King’s life and legacy, held the first 4-day celebration in January of 1984. The events included a community march, a commemoration program, and a food drive. Since then, the events have expanded to include a community breakfast, a candlelight vigil, a student speech, art, and essay contest, a garlanding ceremony, and an awards community reception; and

WHEREAS, the Unity Committee has been a vital force since its inception and is proud of its 40 years of service to the Fresno community. The Unity Committee ensures that Dr. King’s timeless values of truth, justice, compassion, courage, dignity, humility, and community service are commemorated each year during his birthday.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we Mayor Jerry Dyer and the Fresno City Council do hereby proclaim January 11th, 2024, to be:

"Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Committee Day” in the City of Fresno.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and affixed the Great Seal of the City of Fresno, California, this 7th day of December 2023.