



## H.RES. 1293 – COMMEMORATING THE 44TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATHS OF CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS ANDREW GOODMAN, JAMES CHANEY, AND MICHAEL SCHWERNER IN PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI, WHILE WORKING IN THE NAME OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY TO REGISTER VOTERS AND SECURE CIVIL RIGHTS DURING THE SUMMER OF 1964, WHICH HAS BECOME KNOWN AS "FREEDOM SUMMER".

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1293 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative John Lewis (D-GA) on June 20, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary, but was never considered.

H.Res. 1293 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on June 23, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

H.Res. 1293 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- pause and remember Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner and the 44th anniversary of their deaths;
- commemorate the life and work of Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner, and all of the other brave Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of civil rights and voting rights for all Americans; and
- commemorate and acknowledge the legacy of the brave Americans who participated in the civil rights movement and the role that they played in changing the hearts and minds of Americans and creating the political climate necessary to pass legislation to expand civil rights and voting rights for all Americans.

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### BACKGROUND

Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner were volunteers for a civil rights campaign known as Freedom Summer in June 1964 that had the goal of registering as many African American voters as possible in Mississippi. At that time, Mississippi had an African American population of 450,000 that was eligible to vote, however only 16,000 were actually registered to vote.

Goodman was a white volunteer from New York's Queens College and Schwerner was a white Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) field secretary. Chaney was an African American Mississippi native and a member of CORE. On June 21, 1964, the three volunteers left the CORE office in Meridian, Mississippi to travel to Longdale, Mississippi to investigate the burning of the Mount Zion Methodist Church that had been active in the Freedom Summer project.

On their way, they were detained and arrested by law enforcement and taken to the Philadelphia, Mississippi jail. That same evening they were released from jail, but as they drove away several Ku Klux Klan members followed them. They KKK members forced their car off the road, pulled them from the car, and killed them. Their bodies were found after an extensive search that involved the United States Navy and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) in a mound of dirt on August 4, 1964.



# LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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The Federal government tried eighteen men, including a man named Edgar Ray Killen, on charges of conspiring to violate the civil rights of the three men (at the time there were no Federal statutes on murder). Seven of the men were convicted and served prison sentences of less than six years, eight were acquitted, and two walked free because of deadlocked juries.

Edgar Ray Killen was released after a jury reached an 11 to 1 deadlock in favor of a conviction, with the one hold out being quoted as saying that she could never convict a preacher. In 2005, a grand jury indicted Killen on three counts of murder. Killen was convicted of three counts of manslaughter for the deaths of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner on June 21, 2005.

June 21, 2008, marks the 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deaths of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner.

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#### STAFF CONTACT

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