

## House Bill 108 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Bryant of the 160<sup>th</sup>, Stephens of the 161<sup>st</sup>, Stephens of the 164<sup>th</sup>, Carter of the 159<sup>th</sup>, Gordon of the 162<sup>nd</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50, relating to other state symbols, so as to provide  
2 that the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum shall be the official state historical civil  
3 rights museum; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

4 **SECTION 1.**

5 WHEREAS, Savannah has a long and storied role in the civil rights movement, beginning  
6 with a meeting between General Sherman and Secretary of War Stanton and twelve Black  
7 leaders on January 12, 1865, to discuss the matter of emancipation; and

8 WHEREAS, the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, recently named "Georgia's Best  
9 New History Museum" by the Georgia Journal, is named in honor of the late Dr. Ralph Mark  
10 Gilbert. The father of Savannah's modern day Civil Rights Movement and fearless National  
11 Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) leader was known for much  
12 more than his outspoken campaigns for civil rights. He was a nationally known orator,  
13 pulpiteer, and playwright, producing religious dramas, known as passion plays, throughout  
14 the country; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Gilbert served as pastor of historic First African Baptist Church on Franklin  
16 Square in Savannah for 16 years. In 1942, he reorganized the Savannah Branch NAACP,  
17 served as president for eight years and convened the first state conference. Branches from  
18 Savannah, Brunswick, Dublin, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, Albany and three other branches  
19 whose identities are uncertain, attended and elected Rev. Ralph Mark Gilbert president.  
20 Under his courageous leadership, more than forty NAACP branches were organized in  
21 Georgia by 1950; and

22 WHEREAS, Georgia's best new history museum chronicles the civil rights struggle of  
23 Georgia's oldest African American community from slavery to the present. Three floors of

24 handsome photographic and interactive exhibits, includes an NAACP Organization exhibit,  
25 a fiber optic map of 87 significant civil rights sites/events, a lunch counter where "sit ins"  
26 occurred, segregation exhibits, and video presentation are all part of the continuous education  
27 of the public on the history of the civil rights struggle in Savannah and Georgia. The  
28 museum is located in historic Savannah in a five level building that was erected in 1914 as  
29 the Wage Earners Savings and Loan Bank for Black Savannahians, the largest Black bank  
30 in the country at that time.

31 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

32 **SECTION 2.**

33 Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50, relating to other state symbols, is amended by adding a  
34 new Code section to read as follows:

35 "50-3-85.

36 The Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum is designated the official Georgia historical  
37 civil rights museum."

38 **SECTION 3.**

39 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.