

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, in June, 2005, the Mexican government issued the second in a series of five postal stamps depicting Mexican comic book characters; and

WHEREAS, this latest stamp depicts a schoolboy character named "Memin Pinguin" whose exaggerated physical features including oversized lips, eyes and an apelike head along with his speech and mannerisms are the subject of kidding by white characters in the comic book, which started in the 1940s and is still published in Mexico; and

WHEREAS, "Memin Pinguin" is a mischievous and bumbling character who often gets into trouble and is spanked by his mother, also a caricature that some civil rights activists find offensive; and

WHEREAS, Mexico abolished slavery decades before the United States and never enacted Jim Crow laws. The "Memin Pinguin" character resembles hundreds of characters created during legal segregation in the United States, animated and real, including the Amos and Andy minstrels who joked in racist overtones about their ethnicity to the delight of whites-only audiences; and

WHEREAS, African-American historians say that caricatures depicting black people as noble savages paved the way for their dehumanization and, ultimately, mass lynchings; and

WHEREAS, African-American and Latino civil rights leaders, as well as, El Universal, one of Mexico's most influential newspapers, have denounced the stamp; and

WHEREAS, the initial response of the Mexican government was to reject pulling the commemorative series; and

WHEREAS, in light of all of the negative publicity that has embroiled the Mexican government because of the issuance of this particular stamp, they have agreed to not reprint the "Memin Pinguin" stamps; and

WHEREAS, adoption of this resolution can be seen as an important step in continuing to promote racial equality and condemning images that increase the gap between cultures; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles joins a growing coalition of social justice organizations, such as The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the NAACP, National Council of La Raza and National Urban League and the United States government in condemning this stamp and urges for its immediate withdrawal as it is an extreme example of and perpetuates racial stereotyping.

PRESENTED BY: Bernard C. Parks
BERNARD C. PARKS
Councilmember, Eighth District

CO-PRESENTED BY: Jan C. Perry
JAN C. PERRY
Councilmember, Ninth District

SECONDED BY: EG
05-0002-5151

Garry Whitt
W. Russell

APR 08 2005