

By: J. Johnson of Harris

H.R. No. 2292

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The James D. Burrus Alumni Association, the Harris
2 County Historical Commission, the Independence Heights
3 Conservancy, and the James D. Burrus Elementary School celebrated
4 the dedication of an Official Texas Historical Marker at the school
5 on February 8, 2023; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1908, African American families began settling in
7 the Independence Heights community, and in an effort to meet the
8 educational needs of area children, the Independence Heights School
9 was established in a local church; following a petition to the
10 Harris County Commissioners Court in 1911, a two-room house was
11 moved from Sunset Heights to East 39th Street to serve as the
12 official schoolhouse; in addition, the building functioned as an
13 important cultural center and hosted many political and community
14 meetings; Oliphant Lockwood Hubbard, the school's first teacher,
15 later became principal and mayor of Independence Heights; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1923, the Colored Citizens Committee addressed
17 the Houston school board about inequalities and proposed bond
18 allocation for the construction of a new school, which was
19 completed in 1928 at its current location on East 33rd Street; the
20 school was renamed after James Dallas Burrus, an educator who was
21 born into slavery and was a professor of mathematics at Fisk
22 University for 47 years; during its first year in operation, Burrus
23 Elementary had 5 teachers and served 185 students; by the 1930s,
24 enrollment had grown to more than 600 students, with 13 teachers on

1 staff; it became a junior high school for a time, but due to
2 rezoning, desegregation, and the addition of other middle schools,
3 the campus was later returned to an elementary school; and

4 WHEREAS, Over the course of its history, James D. Burrus
5 Elementary School has made a positive difference in the lives of
6 many Houston youth, and the dedication of this historical marker
7 provides a fitting tribute to the essential role it has played in
8 educating several generations of area residents; now, therefore, be
9 it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas
11 Legislature hereby commemorate the dedication of an Official Texas
12 Historical Marker for the James D. Burrus Elementary School and
13 commend all those involved in securing this honor for their
14 efforts.