

By: Dukes, McClendon, Johnson, et al.

H.C.R. No. 46

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The legacy that the Honorable Barbara Jordan  
2 established in her service to the citizens of Texas and the United  
3 States of America remains a source of inspiration to countless  
4 people, and time cannot diminish the contributions of this  
5 admirable patriot, politician, teacher, mentor, friend, icon, and  
6 hero; and

7           WHEREAS, Born on February 21, 1936, to Benjamin and Arlyne  
8 Jordan, Barbara Jordan was raised in Houston's Fifth Ward and  
9 graduated with honors from Phillis Wheatley High School in the  
10 Houston Independent School District; and

11           WHEREAS, Ms. Jordan attended Texas Southern University,  
12 where she majored in government and history and was a member of the  
13 debate team, winning numerous honors for her oratory skills; after  
14 graduating magna cum laude from TSU, she enrolled at the Boston  
15 University School of Law and received her law degree in 1959; and

16           WHEREAS, In 1966, Ms. Jordan became the first black woman  
17 ever elected to the Texas Senate as well as the first African  
18 American to be elected as a state senator in the United States since  
19 1883; and

20           WHEREAS, Following her successful run for a seat in the U.S.  
21 Congress in 1972, Ms. Jordan served in the House of Representatives  
22 from 1973 until 1979, during which time she enhanced her reputation  
23 as an evocative public speaker and arose as a leader on issues  
24 relating to voting rights, consumer protection, energy, and the

1 environment; and

2           WHEREAS, In her role as a member of the House Committee on the  
3 Judiciary, she gained national prominence during the Watergate  
4 impeachment proceedings against President Nixon in 1974; speaking  
5 before the committee, she movingly portrayed the intention of the  
6 framers of the U.S. Constitution and eloquently expressed her faith  
7 in that document, even as she noted that "We the People," the first  
8 words of the preamble to the Constitution, were not originally  
9 intended to apply to African Americans; and

10           WHEREAS, In 1976, Congresswoman Jordan became the first  
11 female and the first African American to serve as the keynote  
12 speaker at the Democratic National Convention, and her speech  
13 reiterated her faith in the Constitution and the desire to form a  
14 national community that would fulfill the country's purpose of  
15 creating and sustaining a society in which all are equal; and

16           WHEREAS, Ms. Jordan retired from elective office in 1979 and  
17 became a distinguished professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of  
18 Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin; for the  
19 remainder of her life, she focused on mentoring a new generation of  
20 aspiring leaders, encouraging them to excel and to commit  
21 themselves to public service; and

22           WHEREAS, At the request of President Bill Clinton, she became  
23 chair of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform in the mid-1990s  
24 and held that office until her death; in 1994, President Clinton  
25 honored her for her patriotism and outstanding service by awarding  
26 her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest  
27 civilian honor; and

1           WHEREAS, Barbara Jordan passed away in January 1996, but her  
2 lifelong commitment to freedom, integrity, equality, and justice  
3 resonates as powerfully today as it did in years past, and she is  
4 indeed deserving of special recognition, on the anniversary of her  
5 birth, in the state that she served so well; now, therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas  
7 hereby designate February 21 through 27 of each year from 2011  
8 through 2020 as Barbara Jordan Freedom Week.