By: Ellis, et al. S.C.R. No. 10

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

- 2 WHEREAS, The legacy that the Honorable Barbara Jordan
- 3 established in her service to the citizens of Texas and the United
- 4 States of America remains a source of inspiration to countless
- 5 people, and time cannot diminish the contributions of this
- 6 admirable patriot, politician, teacher, mentor, friend, icon, and
- 7 hero; and
- 8 WHEREAS, Born on February 21, 1936, to Benjamin and Arlyne
- 9 Jordan, Barbara Jordan was raised in Houston's Fifth Ward and
- 10 graduated with honors from Phillis Wheatley High School in the
- 11 Houston Independent School District; and
- 12 WHEREAS, Ms. Jordan attended Texas Southern University,
- 13 where she majored in government and history and was a member of the
- 14 debate team, winning numerous honors for her oratory skills; after
- 15 graduating magna cum laude from Texas Southern University, she
- 16 enrolled at the Boston University School of Law and received her law
- 17 degree in 1959; and
- 18 WHEREAS, In 1966, Ms. Jordan became the first black woman
- 19 ever elected to the Texas Senate as well as the first African
- 20 American to be elected as a state senator in the United States since
- 21 1883; and
- WHEREAS, Following her successful run for a seat in the
- 23 United States Congress in 1972, Ms. Jordan served in the House of
- 24 Representatives from 1973 until 1979, during which time she

- 1 enhanced her reputation as an evocative public speaker and arose as
- 2 a leader on issues relating to voting rights, consumer protection,
- 3 energy, and the environment; and
- WHEREAS, In her role as a member of the House Committee on the
- 5 Judiciary, she gained national prominence during the Watergate
- 6 impeachment proceedings against President Nixon in 1974; speaking
- 7 before the committee, she movingly portrayed the intention of the
- 8 framers of the United States Constitution and eloquently expressed
- 9 her faith in that document, even as she noted that "We the People,"
- 10 the first words of the preamble to the Constitution, were not
- 11 originally intended to apply to African Americans; and
- 12 WHEREAS, In 1976, Congresswoman Jordan became the first
- 13 female and the first African American to serve as the keynote
- 14 speaker at the Democratic National Convention, and her speech
- 15 reiterated her faith in the Constitution and the desire to form a
- 16 national community that would fulfill the country's purpose of
- 17 creating and sustaining a society in which all are equal; and
- WHEREAS, Ms. Jordan retired from elective office in 1979 and
- 19 became a distinguished professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of
- 20 Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin; for the
- 21 remainder of her life, she focused on mentoring a new generation of
- 22 aspiring leaders, encouraging them to excel and to commit
- 23 themselves to public service; and
- 24 WHEREAS, At the request of President Bill Clinton, she became
- 25 chair of the United States Commission on Immigration Reform in the
- 26 mid-1990s and held that office until her death; in 1994, President
- 27 Clinton honored her for her patriotism and outstanding service by

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- 1 awarding her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's
- 2 highest civilian honor; and
- 3 WHEREAS, Barbara Jordan passed away in January 1996, but her
- 4 lifelong commitment to freedom, integrity, equality, and justice
- 5 resonates as powerfully today as it did in years past, and she is
- 6 indeed deserving of special recognition, on the anniversary of her
- 7 birth, in the state that she served so well; now, therefore, be it
- 8 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
- 9 hereby designate February 21 through 27 of each year from 2011
- 10 through 2020 as Barbara Jordan Freedom Week.