

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 325

WHEREAS, February 21, 2011, marked the 75th anniversary of the birth of the Honorable Barbara Jordan; the legacy that she established in her service to the citizens of Texas and the United States of America remains a source of inspiration to countless people, and time cannot diminish the contributions of this admirable patriot, politician, teacher, mentor, friend, icon, and hero; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

S.R. No. 325

WHEREAS, Barbara Jordan passed away in January 1996, but her lifelong commitment to freedom, integrity, equality, and justice resonates as powerfully today as it did in years past, and her tireless efforts to champion our nation's highest ideals are indeed deserving of our recognition and respect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd Legislature, hereby pay tribute to the life of Barbara Jordan in honor of the 75th anniversary of her birth.

Ellis

Carona
Davis
Duncan
Gallegos
Hinojosa

Lucio
Ogden
Seliger
Shapiro

Wentworth
West
Whitmire
Williams
Zaffirini

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on February 22, 2011, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate