

By: Thompson of Harris

H.R. No. 2155

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, On May 24, 2013, the Houston Independent School
2 District is celebrating the renaming of Houston Gardens Elementary
3 School in honor of the late Ernest McGowen, Sr., an admired civic
4 leader, public servant, and clergyman; and

5 WHEREAS, The first African American elected as a trustee of
6 HISD and of Houston Community College, Reverend McGowen built on
7 the gains of the civil rights movement and worked diligently to
8 advance the cause of social justice; he was instrumental in the
9 adoption of a school holiday observance for the birthday of
10 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and in the hiring and promotion of
11 African American administrators and the inclusion of minority
12 vendors, contractors, and professionals in contract bidding; in
13 addition, he advocated powerfully for better wages and working
14 conditions for maintenance and food service employees and guided
15 the establishment of the area's first vocational-technical high
16 school; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1979, this dynamic Texan became the second
18 African American elected to the Houston City Council, and over the
19 course of a tenure that spanned 14 years, he helped to modernize the
20 police department, secure pay parity for police officers and
21 firefighters, and increase wages for sanitation workers and other
22 municipal personnel; moreover, he played a key role in passage of
23 the ordinance creating the city's minority- and women-owned
24 business program and in the adoption of a paid holiday for

1 Dr. King's birthday; and

2 WHEREAS, Further demonstrating his commitment to the
3 community, Reverend McGowen served for 12 years on the Houston
4 Galveston Area Council, and he was its first elected African
5 American president; in later years, he continued to benefit his
6 fellow citizens through his service on the mayor's Ministerial
7 Council, Transition Team, and Affirmative Action Committee; he was
8 the first African American pastor in the Texas Methodist Conference
9 appointed to lead a predominantly white church, Wesley United
10 Methodist Church; and

11 WHEREAS, Reverend McGowen passed away on August 26, 2012, at
12 the age of 87, having helped break down racial barriers and build
13 bridges to success for subsequent generations; his tremendous
14 accomplishments continue to resonate in the city of Houston, and
15 the renaming of this school is indeed a fitting tribute; now,
16 therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
18 Legislature hereby commemorate the dedication of Ernest McGowen,
19 Sr., Elementary School and honor the life and work of Reverend
20 McGowen.