

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3481

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM

Hearing Date: April 12, 2021 1:00 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Zenobia Joseph, Educator

Self

Austin, TX

1. Position: Against HB 3481, “designating December 1 as Rosa Parks Day.” Amend Line 6. Sec. 662.084: Strike Rosa Parks and replace with “Montgomery Bus Boycott Women’s” Day.

2. Committee Substitute/Floor Amendment Text: Montgomery Bus Boycott Women’s Day. (a) December 1 is Montgomery Bus Boycott Women’s Day in honor of the women who started it and “Rosa Louise McCauley Parks for her courageous act of refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to protest segregation which helped launch the civil rights movement in the United States.”

3. Title VI (Austin Hypocrisy): Capital Metro named its Boardroom for Rosa Parks (2019), put her stickers on the bus (February 2020), and reserved a seat (2021). Since June 3, 2018, Blacks wait 60 minutes for a bus as whites enjoy 6-15 minute headway—contrary to Parks and women who started the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

4. Justification: HB 3481 should acknowledge the women in *Browder vs. Gayle*. “Before Rosa Parks, there was Claudette Colvin. Few people know the story . . . When she was 15, she refused to move to the back of the bus and give up her seat to a white person—nine months before Rosa Parks did the very same thing. . . . Colvin says the NAACP and all the other black organizations felt Parks would be a good icon because ‘she was an adult. They didn’t think teenagers would be reliable.’ She also says Parks had the right hair and the right look. ‘Her skin texture was the kind that people associate with the middle class,’ says Colvin. ‘She fit that profile.’ . . . After Colvin’s arrest, she found herself shunned by parts of her community. . . and became pregnant. Civil rights leaders felt she was an inappropriate symbol for a test case” (NPR, 2009). She is, however, “important because she challenged the law in court, one of four women plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*, the court case that successfully overturned bus segregation laws in Montgomery and Alabama” (NPR, 2009).

5. *Browder v. Gayle*: Butler Browder says, “My mother was Aurelia Eliscera Shines Browder, and she was the lead plaintiff in the most unpronounced but famous case of our times. *Browder v. Gayle*, for the most part, [has] been left out of the saga.” Like HB 3481, “It begins with the arrest of Rosa Parks, and it ends with the court making a decision. When, in fact, it began years before with *Plessy vs. Ferguson* and continued mistreatment for many, many years. And it ends with *Browder vs. Gayle*. Five women had stories to tell—instances of individual mistreatment. They came together to change things for the world. Those women were Mary Louise Smith Ware, Claudette Colvin, Aurelia Browder being the lead plaintiff in this case, [Jo Ann Robinson], and Susie McDonald. They did a whole lot more than start the boycott. They ended it, too.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVi855c1wjI>

6. Book: *Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (1987)* by Jo Ann Robinson, David J. Garrow (Editor). Thanks!

Klaudia Forgacova

Self - Operations Manager

Dallas, TX

My name is Klaudia Forgacova and I support HB 3481. We should celebrate leaders like Rosa Parks in the Civil Rights Movement and this gives Texans a great opportunity to recognize this. The history of this movement needs to be kept alive and

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discussed, and having this as a holiday encourages this. Please pass HB 3481.

Cindy Nitzsche

self

DEER PARK, TX

I am against this bill. This bill has nothing to do with Texas State business. This bill does nothing for Texas residents. The topic matter of this bill is better addressed in a federal forum, not a Texas state forum. While Rosa Parks is historically significant to the United States, any honors should be done on the federal level.