

By: Morales Shaw

H.R. No. 232

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Residents of Houston lost a political icon and
2 fierce champion of social justice with the passing of U.S.
3 Representative Sheila Jackson Lee on July 19, 2024; and

4 WHEREAS, The daughter of Ezra Jackson and Ivalita Bennett
5 Jackson, the former Sheila Jackson was born in New York City and
6 grew up in Jamaica, Queens; she earned a bachelor's degree in
7 political science as a member of Yale University's first coed class
8 and went on to complete her law degree at the University of
9 Virginia; following her marriage to Elwyn Lee, a Houston native,
10 she became the proud mother of two children, Jason and Erica; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1978, Congresswoman Jackson Lee moved to the
12 Bayou City with her husband and began working for the Fulbright &
13 Jaworski law firm; appointed as a municipal judge in 1987, she later
14 became a highly effective member of the city council, and she
15 further served as a deputy agriculture commissioner for the State
16 of Texas; she won her first congressional race in 1994 and was
17 reelected 14 times, never with less than 70 percent of the vote;
18 known for her formidable work ethic, she filed scores of bills
19 addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, and she did not
20 hesitate to work across the aisle to pass them; after the Violence
21 Against Women Act expired in 2019, she fought for its reenactment
22 and authored the legislation that achieved that goal; she was also
23 the author and lead sponsor of the Juneteenth National Independence
24 Day Act, which established the first new federal holiday in nearly

1 four decades; in 2021, she sponsored H.R. 40, a resolution to
2 establish the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals
3 for African Americans, and she succeeded in shepherding it through
4 to a committee vote; her many other major initiatives included the
5 Sentencing Reform Act, Paycheck Fairness Act, and George Floyd Law
6 Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act; known for her passionate
7 speeches on the House floor, she advocated for gay rights long
8 before mainstream acceptance of the movement and continued to serve
9 as a powerful voice for progressive causes, including Black Lives
10 Matter and gun control; she took her message to innumerable media
11 outlets as well; most recently, she lent her support to a federal
12 version of the CROWN Act to prevent discrimination based on
13 hairstyles favored by people of color; and

14 WHEREAS, Congresswoman Jackson Lee held numerous leadership
15 roles, including chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee for Crime,
16 Terrorism, and Homeland Security and senior member of the
17 Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Budget Committees; she was the
18 House Democrats' chief deputy whip, chair of the Congressional
19 Black Caucus Energy Braintrust, co-chair of the Justice Reform Task
20 Force, and a founder and chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus
21 and the Congressional Children's Caucus; *Congressional Quarterly*
22 ranked her among the 50 most effective members of Congress; and

23 WHEREAS, Devoted to her constituents, Congresswoman Jackson
24 Lee was instrumental in directing billions of federal dollars to
25 under-resourced communities; she helped her city recover from
26 numerous natural disasters and other crises, even personally
27 directing traffic to a COVID-19 testing site at the height of the

1 pandemic and unloading food and supplies for residents during the
2 2021 freeze; over the years, she appeared at countless local
3 meetings and events, and she demonstrated deep compassion to those
4 suffering loss, attending funerals, extending words of comfort, and
5 connecting the bereaved with support services; and

6 WHEREAS, Sheila Jackson Lee was a fearless warrior in behalf
7 of freedom, democracy, and positive change, and although she will
8 be greatly missed, her exceptional contributions will continue to
9 resonate in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 89th Texas
11 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Sheila Jackson Lee and
12 extend sincere condolences to the members of her family: to her
13 husband, Elwyn Lee; to her children, Jason and Erica Lee; to her
14 grandchildren, Ellison Bennett Carter and Roy Lee Carter III; and
15 to her other relatives, her many friends, and all who mourn her
16 passing; and, be it further

17 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
18 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of
19 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Sheila
20 Jackson Lee.