

By: Morales Shaw

H.R. No. 247

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 on  
6 January 12, 1950, and grew up in Jamaica, Queens; she earned a  
7 bachelor's degree in political science as a member of Yale  
8 University's first coed class and went on to complete her law degree  
9 at the University of Virginia; following her marriage to Elwyn Lee,  
10 a Houston native, she became the proud mother of two children, Jason  
11 and Erica; and

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, Devoted to her constituents, Congresswoman Jackson  
25 Lee was instrumental in directing billions of federal dollars to  
26 under-resourced communities; she helped her city recover from  
27 numerous natural disasters and other crises, even personally

1 directing traffic to a COVID-19 testing site at the height of the  
2 pandemic and unloading food and supplies for residents during the  
3 2021 freeze; over the years, she appeared at countless local  
4 meetings and events, and she demonstrated deep compassion to those  
5 suffering loss, attending funerals, extending words of comfort, and  
6 connecting the bereaved with support services; and

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

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

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