

By: Morales Shaw

H.R. No. 398

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 and Paycheck Fairness Act; Congresswoman
7 Jackson Lee was known for her passionate speeches on the House
8 floor, and she often took her message to innumerable media outlets
9 as well; most recently, she lent her support to a federal version of
10 the CROWN Act to prevent discrimination based on hairstyles favored
11 by people of color; and

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

21 WHEREAS, Devoted to her constituents, Congresswoman Jackson
22 Lee was instrumental in directing billions of federal dollars to
23 under-resourced communities; she helped her city recover from
24 numerous natural disasters and other crises, even personally
25 directing traffic to a COVID-19 testing site at the height of the
26 pandemic and unloading food and supplies for residents during the
27 2021 freeze; over the years, she appeared at countless local

1 meetings and events, and she demonstrated deep compassion to those
2 suffering loss, attending funerals, extending words of comfort, and
3 connecting the bereaved with support services; and

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

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

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