

By: Miles, et al.

S.R. No. 258

RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The life of an esteemed lawmaker and public servant
2 drew to a close with the passing of the Honorable Sylvester Turner
3 on March 5, 2025, at the age of 70; and

4 WHEREAS, Congressman Turner's monumental career encompassed
5 service as a state legislator, as the mayor of Houston, and as a
6 member of the United States House of Representatives, and the
7 ideals that guided all of his work were forged in the Bayou City's
8 Acres Homes neighborhood, where he was raised; born on
9 September 27, 1954, he shared a two-bedroom house with his parents
10 and eight siblings in his early years; while watching the
11 Kennedy-Nixon debates with his family as a small boy, he resolved to
12 become a lawyer and public servant, beginning his lifelong
13 commitment to helping others; his father, a commercial painter,
14 died when he was just 13, and his mother continued to support the
15 family as a housekeeper at the Rice Hotel; although neither of his
16 parents received a diploma, he became student body president and
17 valedictorian at Klein High School, and he went on to graduate from
18 the University of Houston and Harvard Law School; and

19 WHEREAS, Congressman Turner began his career as a trial
20 lawyer with the Fulbright & Jaworski firm and later cofounded
21 Barnes & Turner, a practice focused on commercial law and personal
22 injury litigation; in addition, he taught at the Texas Southern
23 University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, at the South Texas
24 College of Law, and in the University of Houston Law School

1 continuing legal education program; and

2 WHEREAS, First elected to the Texas House of Representatives
3 in 1988, Congressman Turner was returned to office 13 times and
4 served three terms as speaker pro tempore; he helped shape fiscal
5 policy during more than two decades on the House Appropriations
6 Committee and multiple terms as chair of its Subcommittee on
7 Criminal Justice; moreover, he distinguished himself in his duties
8 as a member of the Legislative Budget Board and as chair of the
9 Texas Legislative Black Caucus and the Greater Houston Area
10 Legislative Delegation; known for his eloquence and his ability to
11 work across the aisle, he secured passage of such important
12 legislation as a 2007 children's health insurance measure; his
13 passion for health care, education, human services, consumer
14 rights, and juvenile justice earned him recognition as "the
15 conscience of the House"; and

16 WHEREAS, Congressman Turner was elected to the first of two
17 terms as Houston mayor in 2015; he guided the city through a period
18 of unprecedented challenges, among them Hurricane Harvey and six
19 other federally declared disasters, as well as the COVID-19
20 pandemic; early in his tenure, he strengthened finances by crafting
21 a solution for the mounting pension debt crisis; he also promoted
22 sustainability, bolstering the city's status as the energy capital
23 of the world; addressing violent crime and mental health, he
24 launched the One Safe Houston initiative, and other important
25 programs included Hire Houston Youth, One Clean Houston, and
26 Complete Communities, which fostered economic advancement through
27 revitalization of underserved areas; in addition to his other

1 responsibilities, he provided national leadership in urban policy
2 as chair of the Global Resilient Cities Network, Climate Mayors,
3 and the African American Mayors Association, and he was a trustee of
4 the U.S. Conference of Mayors; and

5 WHEREAS, In 2024, citizens elected him to Congress to
6 represent the historically significant 18th Congressional
7 District, and he served as a member of the Homeland Security and the
8 Science, Space, and Technology Committees; during his time in
9 office, he maintained the incomparable work ethic and whirlwind
10 pace that defined his entire career, devoting himself to the
11 lawmaking process, staying in close touch with constituents, and
12 participating in numerous neighborhood and community-wide events
13 in Houston; he also set aside time to attend the Church Without
14 Walls, where he worshipped for well over three decades, and he
15 rarely missed a Sunday service, even while undergoing cancer
16 treatment; he was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity,
17 Incorporated, and remained a proud Acres Homes resident; and

18 WHEREAS, Dedicated to bridging divisions and creating
19 vibrant communities for all, Sylvester Turner demonstrated
20 visionary leadership that greatly benefited the city of Houston and
21 the wider State of Texas, and his legacy will continue to inspire
22 all those who seek to follow in his footsteps; now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 89th Texas Legislature
24 hereby honor the memory of Congressman Sylvester Turner and extend
25 sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his daughter,
26 Ashley Turner Captain, and her husband, Jimmie; to his grandson,
27 Jameson Captain; and to his other relatives and many friends; and,

S.R. No. 258

1 be it further

2 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
3 prepared for his family and that when the Texas Senate adjourns this
4 day, it do so in memory of Congressman Turner.