

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 107

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Mary

A. Washington, a teacher and educator and longtime leader of and advocate for the Louisiana Association of Educators.

WHEREAS, Mary A. Washington was born August 17, 1954, to Paul Washington Sr. and Orelia Leger Washington in Branch, Louisiana, located in Acadia parish and she died unexpectedly, but peacefully, in her sleep, on April 4, 2018; and

WHEREAS, at the time of her death, Ms. Washington was serving as the chairperson of the Acadia Parish Council, coordinator of her Bible study group at St. Theresa Church, Crowley, and a member of the Legion of Mary; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Washington graduated from Crowley High School in Crowley, Louisiana, and earned a bachelor's degree in education, graduating cum laude from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and

WHEREAS, later in her career, Mary Washington returned to the role of student and earned her master's degree and received certification as a reading specialist; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Washington taught in the Lafayette Parish school system for thirty-four years, many of those years as an elementary math specialist, seeing potential in all who came across her path, especially her students, instilling in them a sense that they all had greatness in them; and

WHEREAS, Mary Washington served as president of the Lafayette Parish Association of Educators and later as president and chief executive officer of the Louisiana Association of Educators, known as the LAE, at a time when it represented nearly twenty thousand public school teachers and support employees; she was immensely proud that teachers statewide received substantial raises in five of the six years that she headed the LAE, and she relished her role as the representative of the association's members before the Louisiana Legislature, among other duties; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Washington's career in teaching was multifaceted, using her expertise to design and conduct various workshops, including those that focused on classroom management, student motivation, analyzing test scores, and understanding high stakes testing; and

WHEREAS, Mary Washington was appointed by five consecutive governors, from Governor Roemer through Governor Jindal, to serve on various state boards and commissions, including Louisiana Education Achievement and Results Now (LEARN) Commission, a group that developed a comprehensive and ambitious plan that pulled together the state reform efforts in education, stated goals for improvement in a variety of areas, and provided fourteen million dollars to local school systems in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Washington also served on the Lafayette Parish Blue Ribbon Commission on Education and the advisory board of the Louisiana Systemic Initiative Project at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Washington was an appointed member of the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and she served on the transition teams of Governor Edwin Edwards and Lafayette Mayor Kenny Bowen, serving as the only female educator in that group; and

WHEREAS, Mary Washington was a member of the Louisiana Democratic State Central Committee and she spent her professional career fighting for quality public schools, the basic right of every child to receive a high quality education, and for teachers and school support personnel to be treated with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Washington became an icon as an educator and a civic leader, and she was known for her eloquence, knowledge, and her deep commitment to quality education in her native state; and

WHEREAS, during her noteworthy career, Ms. Washington received numerous awards and accolades, including; being recognized as "A Woman Who Means Business" in 2000, Lafayette Democratic Party Lifetime Achievement Award, she was a graduate of the Council for a Better Louisiana's Leadership Louisiana program, and she received numerous commendations for her leadership in public education from governors Edwin Edwards and Mike Foster, from Attorney General Richard Ieyoub and from the members of BESE and

she was honored with "Mary A. Washington Day" in Crowley, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, beyond her work in public school education, Mary Washington treasured spending time with her family and spoiling her nieces and nephews while instilling in them much wisdom and pushing them to never give up and not to limit their dreams, all lessons that blessed the lives of the next generation of her family; and

WHEREAS, Mary A. Washington saw potential in everyone who crossed her path, from second grade public school students to governors and other state leaders, and she demanded greatness from everyone, especially herself, giving freely of her gifts and talents, including her kindness and sense of humor, to enrich all the lives she touched; and

WHEREAS, with a deep faith and a belief that God placed people in her life purposefully, she took note of the talents and gifts each was given and spoke faith to those fortunate enough to cross her path, encouraging them and leading them to see themselves as she saw them; full of promise and abilities, only waiting to be developed; and

WHEREAS, in a life of faith, love, encouragement, and a focus on education as a means for everyone to develop their God-given talents and strengths, Mary A. Washington served her God through her dedication to an educational system in Louisiana that serves all Louisianians and maximizes the talents of each and every child seeking that quality education.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of Mary A. Washington, teacher and educator and longtime leader of and advocate for the Louisiana Association of Educators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ms. Keisha d'Augereaux, Ms. Washington's niece, on behalf of her family.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES