

2016 Second Extraordinary Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 20

BY SENATOR PETERSON

SENATE. Recognizes the 120th anniversary of the landmark United States Supreme Court *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, and encourages President Barack Obama to bestow the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously upon Homer Adolph Plessy.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To recognize the 120th anniversary of the landmark United States Supreme Court case
3 *Plessy v. Ferguson* and encourage President Barack Obama to bestow the United
4 States Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously upon Homer Adolph Plessy.

5 WHEREAS, this year marks the 120th anniversary of the *Plessy v. Ferguson*
6 decision, the case that marked the first post-reconstruction use of the Fourteenth
7 Amendment's "equal protection " provision in a legal challenge to segregation; and

8 WHEREAS, in 1896, through the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, the
9 Supreme Court established the doctrine of separate-but-equal as the law of the land; and

10 WHEREAS, the NAACP incorporated Mr. Plessy's 14th Amendment arguments
11 before the United States Supreme Court in the 1954 landmark case, *Brown v. Board of*
12 *Education of Topeka*, in which the Supreme Court overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson*
13 decision and declared that state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white
14 students to be unconstitutional; and

15 WHEREAS, Homer Adolph Plessy was born on March 17, 1862, in New Orleans,
16 Louisiana, to a family of mixed racial heritage who were considered free people of color;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Mr. Plessy worked as a shoemaker and also took up social activism and

1 in 1887 served as vice president of the Justice, Protective , Educational, and Social Club to
2 reform the New Orleans public education system; and

3 WHEREAS, On June 7, 1892, Mr. Plessy was removed from the East Louisiana
4 railroad train, arrested at the corner of Royal and Press Streets in New Orleans, and charged
5 with violating the 1890 Louisiana Separate Car Act that separated railroad passengers by
6 race; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Plessy's act of civil disobedience was a test case organized by the
8 Citizens Committee, whose philosophy and strategies inspired the Civil Rights movement
9 of the 20th century, which aimed to overturn segregation laws that were being enacted across
10 the South; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Plessy passed away on March 1, 1925, at the age of sixty-two, and
12 his courage, commitment, and sacrifice opened the gates of the Civil Rights movement
13 across the South; and

14 WHEREAS, we join in support to encourage President Barack Obama to bestow the
15 United States Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously upon Mr. Plessy in recognition
16 of the impact his fight for justice had on the advancement of blacks in America and the
17 immense effect his life had on making the country a better place.

18 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
19 does hereby encourage President Barack Obama to bestow the United States Presidential
20 Medal of Freedom posthumously upon Homer Adolph Plessy.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Ashley Mitchell Carter.

DIGEST

SR 20 Original

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Peterson

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