

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 672

By Lamberth

A RESOLUTION to recognize Deborah Taylor Tate on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of public service; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Taylor Tate is one such estimable person, who has distinguished herself as a professional of the greatest dedication, ability, and integrity; and

WHEREAS, having served with distinction as Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) since January 2015, Mrs. Tate will be taking a much-deserved retirement in early 2022; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Tate was appointed by the Tennessee Supreme Court in January 2015 to oversee the administrative functions of the State court system; during her tenure, she is credited with increasing the stature and funding of the AOC; overseeing the extensive broadening of the court's involvement with other branches, including the implementation of twelve Safe Baby Courts; leading efforts to stem the impact of the opioid and addiction epidemic; and coordinating two Eviction Summits during the height of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, her multi-disciplinary efforts expanded access to justice programs, including most recently a "Justice Bus" to deliver legal and other support services into rural communities; and

WHEREAS, in addition to serving as chief operating officer, she is currently serving as co-chair of the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) National Opioid Task Force and on the COSCA Board of Directors, the Juvenile Justice Task Force, the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System Board of Trustees, the Information Systems Council, the Human Trafficking Advisory Council, the Three Branch Institute, and the Tennessee Domestic Violence State Coordinating Council; and

WHEREAS, a former commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Mrs. Tate, who was twice nominated by President George W. Bush and unanimously approved by the U.S. Senate to the FCC, began her professional career in Tennessee state government and served as assistant legal counsel and senior policy advisor to two former Tennessee governors, Don Sundquist and Lamar Alexander; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Tate also served as both chairman and director of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority and led the health facilities commission and was a director at Vanderbilt University Institute of Public Policy; and

WHEREAS, she has remained active at the international level in her role as the first Special Envoy to the International Telecommunications Union and was recognized as a Laureate for her work with child online issues; nationally, she serves as a director of Healthstream, Inc., and is the Centerstone Research Institute's National Policy Co-Chair for Mental Health Advocacy; and

WHEREAS, a licensed attorney, Deborah Tate is a Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 Listed Mediator, Nashville Bar Foundation Fellow, and served in private practice representing families and juveniles in juvenile court as a guardian ad litem; she was also president of the Court Appointed Special Advocates board and previously coordinated both the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Title 33 Commission, which rewrote the entire mental health law for the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a fifth-generation Tennessee native, Deborah Tate was born in Murfreesboro and received both her Bachelor of Arts degree and Juris Doctor degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and also studied at Vanderbilt University Law School while working as a law clerk to Governor Alexander; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Tate is a committed member of her community who gives generously of her time and talent to a number of organizations, including Common Sense Media, Centerstone of Tennessee, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, and Renewal House, an organization she helped found; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Tate is an active and devout member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, which she has served faithfully for many years as an elder; she lives in Nashville with her husband, William H. Tate, who is a partner in the law firm of Howard, Tate, Sowell, Wilson, Leathers & Johnson, and they are the parents of adult children and the grandparents of one grandson; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Tate possesses a unique ability to develop a constructive consensus; her remarkable success as a public servant is directly attributable to her high standards of civility, good will, and probity; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Tate is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the Volunteer State, and she is to be especially commended for her exemplary service as Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts and for her many years of honorable and astute service to the citizens of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Deborah Taylor Tate our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, offering our deepest gratitude for her distinguished service to this State and wishing her every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.