

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 565

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to recognize Marva Gossett Bell of Memphis on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should recognize, particularly on the occasion of their retirement, those outstanding teachers who have devoted their careers to providing the highest quality education for Tennessee's students; and

WHEREAS, Marva Gossett Bell is one such estimable educator who will enter her well-deserved retirement after thirty-five years in the classroom as a teacher of early childhood, special education, and the method of Dr. Maria Montessori; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of Civil Rights activists in Memphis, the mother of three successful adult children, and a grandmother, Marva Gossett Bell is a highly respected member of her community; and

WHEREAS, Marva Gossett Bell holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from Rhodes College, a Master of Science degree in Special Education from the University of Memphis, and Montessori teacher certification from the Memphis Montessori Institute; and

WHEREAS, her thirty-five years of teaching experience include years of service within private Montessori schools; the Shrine School, a public school that specializes in serving children with multiple disabilities; the campus school operated by the University of Memphis; and the last six years as a founding teacher at Libertas School of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Bell has been instrumental as a teacher-leader at Libertas, which is the first and only public Montessori charter school in Tennessee; due in part to Ms. Bell's enormous contributions, Libertas, which is a part of Tennessee's Achievement School District, has transformed a struggling neighborhood elementary school into a Level 5 school, the highest designation for academic growth in the State; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Marva Gossett Bell was rated a Level 5 teacher for performing significantly above expectations during her time in the public school

system; academically, she is an expert teacher of early literacy and mathematics, who has helped close the gap in learning for students in poverty and those with special needs; and

WHEREAS, more exceptional is how she develops the whole child, as Ms. Bell teaches sensorial and practical life, fine and gross motor skills, restorative practices, peaceful conflict resolution, and culture. She enriches her students by imparting her deep knowledge of African-American history and culture, poetry, and literature; and

WHEREAS, what makes Ms. Bell's classroom truly a national model is how she harmonizes diverse students into a highly functioning community; her classroom includes incredibly diverse levels of ability, from autism and developmental delay to cerebral palsy, as well as intellectually gifted. She empowers all children to be independent, while helping them care for and depend on each other and to thrive together; and

WHEREAS, during her extensive career, she also spent seven years training other teachers for the Memphis Montessori Institute; the teachers who have been trained by Ms. Bell describe her as among the greatest teachers they have ever met; and

WHEREAS, an organized professional who always set high expectations for her students, including our colleague State Senator Raumesh Akbari and her twin sister, Raumina Akbari, Marva Gossett Bell has truly served as an inspiration to her colleagues and her students alike, and her friendship and counsel are highly valued by those who are fortunate to know her; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Ms. Bell has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of the community at large; and

WHEREAS, Marva Gossett Bell truly epitomizes the dedicated teacher who is wholly committed to the highest ideals of public service and quality education for all, and she should be specially recognized for her manifold achievements on the occasion of her retirement; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Marva Gossett Bell on the occasion of her retirement, commending her exceptional service to the children of Memphis, saluting her professional expertise and personal excellence, and extending to her our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and 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.