

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 166

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To designate November 14, 2025, as "Ruby Bridges Day" in the state of Louisiana in honor of Ruby Bridges' courage, sacrifice, and lifelong commitment to advancing civil rights and promoting racial equality.

WHEREAS, Ruby Nell Bridges was born on September 8, 1954, in Tylertown, Mississippi, to Abon and Lucille Bridges, and moved with her family to New Orleans, Louisiana, at the age of two in search of better opportunities; and

WHEREAS, her early life coincided with the historic 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional and that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal"; and

WHEREAS, despite continued resistance to integration in Louisiana, Federal District Judge Skelly Wright ordered desegregation to begin in New Orleans public schools in 1960, a ruling that placed Louisiana at the center of the national civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, on November 14, 1960, at the age of six, Ruby Bridges became the first African American child to integrate into an all-white elementary school in the South, William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, under the protection of U.S. Marshals amidst intense public protest and hostility; and

WHEREAS, her presence was met with widespread resistance: she was the only student in her class, parents pulled their children from the school, and she endured threats, isolation, and acts of hatred on a daily basis - yet she never missed a single day of school; and

WHEREAS, Ruby's teacher, Barbara Henry, who had moved from Boston, stood as a symbol of compassion and allyship, teaching Ruby alone in the classroom for a year and forging a lasting bond of mutual respect and care; and

WHEREAS, Ruby's bravery and her family's sacrifice, her parents losing their jobs

and her family enduring hardship and separation, became emblematic of the human cost of desegregation, yet also of the courage and dignity that defined the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Ruby Bridges' childhood experience was immortalized in Norman Rockwell's iconic painting, *The Problem We All Live With*, which became a powerful visual symbol of the desegregation era and helped shift the national consciousness on race and equality; and

WHEREAS, Ruby's story has continued to inspire generations, through books, speaking engagements, and the founding of the Ruby Bridges Foundation, which promotes tolerance, education, and unity among children and communities to end racism in America; and

WHEREAS, her life story was popularized for a new generation through Robert Coles' 1995 children's book *The Story of Ruby Bridges* and the 1998 Disney film *Ruby Bridges*, reigniting public awareness of her profound impact on the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Ruby Bridges' bravery and composure in the face of intense hostility and adversity challenged the deeply entrenched systems of racial segregation and injustice in public education; and

WHEREAS, her courageous actions marked a critical moment in the American civil rights movement and helped to pave the way for greater equality in our nation's schools; and

WHEREAS, Ruby Bridges' story continues to serve as a powerful reminder of the impact that one determined individual, no matter how young, can have in advancing justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Ruby Bridges remains a living symbol of resilience, hope, and change, advocating for a more just and equitable world, and continues to serve as a role model for children across Louisiana and the nation; and

WHEREAS, designating a day in Ruby Bridges' honor will inspire reflection, education, and community engagement, while reaffirming our collective commitment to ensuring that all children, regardless of race or background, have access to safe, inclusive, and high-quality education.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate November 14, 2025, as "Ruby Bridges Day" in Louisiana in honor of her historic role in advancing school integration and her lifelong commitment to civil rights and social justice.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE