

2018 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 107

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences on the death of Mary A. Washington.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Mary
3 A. Washington, a teacher and educator and longtime leader of and advocate for the
4 Louisiana Association of Educators.

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

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

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

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

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

1 had greatness in them; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 WHEREAS, Ms. Washington became an icon as an educator and a civic leader, and

1 she was known for her eloquence, knowledge, and her deep commitment to quality education
2 in her native state; and

3 WHEREAS, during her noteworthy career, Ms. Washington received numerous
4 awards and accolades, including; being recognized as "A Woman Who Means Business" in
5 2000, Lafayette Democratic Party Lifetime Achievement Award, she was a graduate of the
6 Council for a Better Louisiana's Leadership Louisiana program, and she received numerous
7 commendations for her leadership in public education from governors Edwin Edwards and
8 Mike Foster, from Attorney General Richard Ieyoub and from the members of BESE and
9 she was honored with "Mary A. Washington Day" in Crowley, Louisiana; and

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

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

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

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

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

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to

