

House Resolution 626

By: Representatives Murphy of the 120th, Richardson of the 19th, Ehrhart of the 36th, Hugley of the 133rd, Porter of the 143rd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears on the occasion of her retirement from the
2 Supreme Court of Georgia and inviting her to appear before the House of Representatives;
3 and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears, a beloved daughter of Onnye J. Sears and the
5 late Lt. Colonel Thomas E. Sears, was born in Heidelberg, Germany, and grew up in
6 Savannah, Georgia; and

7 WHEREAS, after Chief Justice Sears earned a bachelor's degree from Cornell University in
8 Ithica, New York, she returned to the great State of Georgia and worked as a reporter for the
9 *Columbus Ledger* newspaper in Columbus, Georgia, honing writing skills that she would
10 continue to utilize throughout her career; and

11 WHEREAS, after a year as a reporter, Chief Justice Sears returned to school to earn a law
12 degree from Emory University and upon graduation worked as an associate with the law firm
13 of Alston & Bird in Atlanta, Georgia; and

14 WHEREAS, Chief Justice Sears began her distinguished judicial career in 1985 with her
15 appointment to the Municipal Court of Atlanta, serving for three years before being elected
16 to the bench for the Superior Court of Fulton County and becoming the youngest person and
17 first black woman to serve as a superior court judge in the State of Georgia; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1992, Chief Justice Sears was appointed as a Justice to the Supreme Court
19 of Georgia by Governor Zell Miller and again earned the distinction of the first woman and
20 youngest person to hold such honor in the state's history; and

21 WHEREAS, on June 28, 2005, Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears made American history as she
22 was sworn in as the first African American female Chief Justice in the United States; and

23 WHEREAS, during her impressive legal and judicial career, Chief Justice Sears has authored
24 several legal articles for *The Fulton County Daily Report*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*,
25 *Verdict* magazine, and several scholarly publications; and

26 WHEREAS, her groundbreaking career and work has been recognized with several
27 prestigious honors such as being named to *Georgia Trend's* 100 Most Influential People in
28 Georgia and earning a Phenomenal Woman Award from Spelman College, a Women in the
29 Profession Margaret Brent Award from the American Bar Association, a Woman of Courage
30 Award from Nabisco Company, and several honorary degrees from across the nation; and

31 WHEREAS, Chief Justice Sears has been awarded keys to the city for Atlanta, Gainesville,
32 Macon, Savannah, Keysville, Forsyth, Albany, Columbus, and Fulton County; and

33 WHEREAS, her judicial career has been marked as one of fairness, balance, integrity, and
34 a masterful application of legal principles and precedent, and her presence on the bench will
35 be sorely missed.

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
37 the members of this body commend the outstanding and impressive judicial career of Chief
38 Justice Leah Ward Sears, congratulate her on the occasion of her retirement from the
39 Supreme Court of Georgia, and invite her to appear before the House of Representatives at
40 a time and date to be designated by the Speaker of the House.

41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
42 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Chief Justice Leah Ward
43 Sears.