

House Resolution 57

By: Representatives Brooks of the 63rd, Abdul-Salaam of the 74th, Smyre of the 132nd, Williams of the 165th, Abrams of the 84th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring Mrs. Rosa Parks, Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., Reverend Hosea L. Williams,
2 Reverend Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, and Reverend Joseph Everhart Boone, recognizing their
3 accomplishments as worthy of enduring memorials, and urging the placement of their
4 portraits in the state capitol; and for other purposes.

5 PART I

6 WHEREAS, on December 1, 1955, seamstress Rosa Parks became a beacon of courage and
7 a symbol of the Civil Rights Movement when she refused to give up her seat on a city bus
8 to a white passenger, accepting arrest, trial, and conviction rather than humiliation; and

9 WHEREAS, her quiet insistence on human dignity in the face of segregation, racism, and
10 Jim Crow laws sparked the city-wide bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, that brought an
11 unknown young minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to national prominence; and

12 WHEREAS, alongside Dr. King, Rosa Parks became a leader and an icon in the national
13 effort that resulted in the United States Supreme Court decision outlawing the segregation
14 of city buses and gave critical momentum to the larger battle for civil rights; and

15 WHEREAS, Rosa Parks has been hailed as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" in
16 America for her pivotal act on that day in Alabama, as well as for her lifelong commitment
17 to justice for black Americans; and

18 WHEREAS, Rosa Parks received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize, the
19 Presidential Medal of Freedom, and a Congressional Gold Medal, and following her death
20 at age 92, she become the first woman to lie in state in the United States Capitol Rotunda.

21

PART II

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., was born in Linden, Alabama, on March 11,
23 1926; and

24 WHEREAS, his involvement in political activism began while he was a student at Alabama
25 State University when he led demonstrations protesting the lack of heat and hot water in his
26 dormitory; and

27 WHEREAS, in 1951, he earned a Master of Arts degree in sociology from Atlanta University
28 and then became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama; and

29 WHEREAS, while living in Montgomery, he formed a close and enduring partnership with
30 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

31 WHEREAS, in 1955, when Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus,
32 Dr. Abernathy and Dr. King organized the bus boycott in Montgomery that ended when the
33 United States Supreme Court affirmed the ruling that segregation on buses was
34 unconstitutional; and

35 WHEREAS, Dr. Abernathy was the secretary-treasurer of the Southern Christian Leadership
36 Conference (SCLC) and assumed the presidency of the SCLC after Dr. King's death; and

37 WHEREAS, in May, 1968, he organized the Poor People's Campaign March on
38 Washington, D.C., hoping to bring attention to the plight of the nation's impoverished, and
39 for which he was jailed for nearly three weeks; and

40 WHEREAS, Dr. Abernathy, a giant in the civil rights struggle whose legacy endures, died
41 April 17, 1990.

42

PART III

43 WHEREAS, Reverend Hosea L. Williams was an activist fueled by compassionate
44 understanding and raw courage, whose activism over the course of a career that spanned four
45 decades was always in service to God, his family, his people, the nation, and all of humanity;
46 and

47 WHEREAS, it was in leading the historic march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on
48 "Bloody Sunday" in 1965 that Hosea L. Williams's courage was most evident, and that
49 pivotal event was instrumental in securing passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and

50 WHEREAS, Reverend Williams served with distinction as a member of the Georgia House
51 of Representatives from 1974 to 1983, representing District 54; and

52 WHEREAS, as chief executive of "Hosea's Feed the Hungry and Homeless in Metro
53 Atlanta," founded in 1970, Reverend Williams assumed responsibility for feeding thousands
54 of Atlanta's homeless during the holidays each year; and

55 WHEREAS, Hosea L. Williams served the citizens of the State of Georgia with great
56 effectiveness and unparalleled dedication and it is only fitting and proper that he be duly
57 recognized and honored for decades of service in devotion to timeless principles.

58 PART IV

59 WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Joseph E. Lowery is one of the State of Georgia's most
60 distinguished citizens, a nationally recognized preacher, and a renowned civil rights leader;
61 and

62 WHEREAS, when *Ebony* magazine named him one of the nation's 15 greatest black
63 preachers, he was described as "the consummate voice of biblical social relevancy, a focused
64 voice, speaking truth to power"; and

65 WHEREAS, when the NAACP honored him at its 1997 convention, he was called the "dean
66 of the civil rights movement"; and

67 WHEREAS, as head of the Civic Affairs Association in Mobile, Alabama, he led the
68 movement for the desegregation of buses and public accommodations; and

69 WHEREAS, in 1957, he cofounded with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Southern Christian
70 Leadership Conference and served as its president and chief executive officer from 1977 to
71 1998; and

72 WHEREAS, Dr. Lowery led protests in Warren, North Carolina, against the dumping of
73 toxic waste in poor communities, which led to the environmental justice movement; and

74 WHEREAS, he served as pastor of Atlanta's oldest predominantly black Central United
75 Methodist Church for 18 years, and, from 1986 to 1992, he was the esteemed leader of the
76 Cascade United Methodist Church; and

77 WHEREAS, as convener of the Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda, he is a strong
78 force for election reform, criminal justice system reform, and government reform.

79 PART V

80 WHEREAS, premier clergyman and civil rights activist Reverend Joseph Everhart Boone
81 had a career that spanned nearly four decades, transforming thousands of African American
82 lives as he carried the message of economic dignity from the pulpit, through the streets, and
83 to the boardrooms of America; and

84 WHEREAS, Reverend Boone was a man of uncommon vision, charged and driven by
85 formidable dedication as he carried forth with unflagging courage his conviction that each
86 citizen has the right to dignified participation in the American economy's mainstream, both
87 as producers and consumers; and

88 WHEREAS, Reverend Boone's miraculous achievements included serving as Chief
89 Negotiator for Operation Breadbasket, the economic arm of the Southern Christian
90 Leadership Conference; presiding as Pastor at Rush Memorial Congregational Church in
91 Atlanta, the meeting and organizational base for the Student Non-Violent Civil Rights
92 movement, and at the First Congregational Church in Alabama, where he organized the first
93 "Selective Buying Campaign" in Alabama; acting as Director of the Metropolitan Atlanta
94 Summit Leadership Congress, Inc., during which time he was designated by Mrs. Coretta
95 Scott King to coordinate the first leg of the "Poor People's Campaign"; leading the P.J.
96 Woods Center for the Blind as its director, coordinating programs including a 24 hour
97 residential treatment facility; and persuading the FCC as the cochairperson of Atlanta
98 Against Unfairness in Broadcasting to condition license renewals for all major television and
99 radio companies on providing credible programming which is relative to the needs of black
100 people in Georgia; and

101 WHEREAS, Reverend Boone's career in public service earned him a distinguished series of
102 honors and awards, including "Civic Leader of the Year" in 1959 from the First
103 Congregational Church in Anniston, Alabama; "The Young Man of the Year in Religion" in
104 1964 from the Atlanta International Chapter of the Wise Men; The Excelsior Knights

105 Citizenship Award in 1967; an appointment by Governor Jimmy Carter to the Governor's
106 Council on Human Relations in 1971; WGUN's Outstanding Citizen Radio Award in 1971;
107 "Civil Rights Fighter of the Year" in 1975 from the Bronner Brothers; and the "Civil Rights
108 Award" in 1991 from Clark Atlanta University.

109 **PART VI**

110 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY that the
111 members of this body honor Mrs. Rosa Parks, Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., Reverend
112 Hosea L. Williams, Reverend Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, and Reverend Joseph Everhart Boone
113 for their gallant service to this state and this nation as leaders of the Civil Rights Movement
114 and in recognition of that service urge the Capitol Arts Standards Commission to authorize
115 the placement of a portrait of each of them on the second floor of the state capitol building
116 alongside the portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

117 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
118 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the public and the press.