

Senate Resolution 304

By: Senators Anderson of the 43rd, Seay of the 34th, Davenport of the 44th, James of the 35th, Sims of the 12th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending the National Council of Negro Women; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, extraordinary educator and political leader Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955)
4 founded NCNW in 1935 as an "organization of organizations" to represent national and
5 international concerns of black women. NCNW fought for jobs, the right to vote and
6 anti-lynching legislation. It gave black women the opportunity to realize their goals for
7 social justice and human rights through united, constructive action. The legendary
8 Dr. Dorothy Irene Height led NCNW for decades, securing its legacy of enlightened
9 leadership and influence; and

10 WHEREAS, Mary McLeod Bethune, NCNW Founder and 1st National President, Advisor
11 of Minority Affairs to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, said that she could not rest to
12 see the unharnessed power among our women, so she called upon 28 national women leaders
13 who responded to her call. She pointed out that what was needed was not another
14 organization, but one that would bring organizations together. Mary Church Terrell proposed
15 forming a "Council." Thus, Mrs. Bethune founded the National Council of Negro Women
16 as such - "a national organization of national organizations" at the 137th Street Branch,
17 YWCA, New York City, December 5, 1935; and

18 WHEREAS, through the years there has been growing appreciation and recognition of the
19 value of a unified voice in the corridors of power. This has been expressed in different ways.
20 What happens on Capitol Hill has direct bearing on the quality-of-life issues core to our
21 community's survival and well-being, and our voices must continue to be heard loudly. As
22 NCNW also focused on ending discrimination against blacks and women in the military,
23 housing, employment, and voting; and

24 WHEREAS, in November, 1953, the Council elected Vivian Carter Mason, NCNW 3rd
25 National President as president. Under her leadership, NCNW members participated in

26 numerous meetings and conferences held by such groups as the U.N. Commission on the
27 Status of Women, the American Association for the United Nations, the International
28 Council of Women of the World, and the National Advisory Committee on Health. NCNW
29 marked its 20th anniversary in 1955. Over its first 20 years, NCNW helped African
30 American women break down barriers that often isolated them from mainstream America.
31 Through perseverance, the council helped make it acceptable for black women to be a part
32 of national and international affairs; and

33 WHEREAS, in 1963, Height was one of the organizers of the famed March on Washington.
34 She stood close to Martin Luther King, Jr., when he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.
35 Height received many honors for her contributions to society. In 1994, President Bill Clinton
36 awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2004, President George W. Bush gave
37 Height the Congressional Gold Medal. She later befriended the first African American
38 President of the United States, Barack Obama, who called her "the godmother of the Civil
39 Rights Movement," according to the *New York Times*. Height died in Washington, D.C., on
40 April 20, 2010. On February 1, 2017, the United States Postal Service kicked off Black
41 History month with the issuance of the Dorothy Height forever stamp honoring her civil
42 rights legacy; and

43 WHEREAS, NCNW has a rich heritage of advancing the opportunities and the quality of life
44 for African American women, their families, and their communities. With its 28 national
45 affiliate organizations and its more than 200 community based sections, NCNW has outreach
46 to nearly four million women, all contributing to the peaceful solutions to the problems of
47 human welfare and rights. We progress and move forward to new heights with our new
48 President Mrs. Ingrid Saunders Jones.

49 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that members of this body
50 recognize and commend the National Council of Negro Women for the great work this
51 organization continues to do for the State of Georgia.

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
53 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the National
54 Council of Negro Women.