

Senate Resolution 500

By: Senators Esteves of the 35th, Halpern of the 39th and Kemp of the 38th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and legacy of Jamila "Mary Ethel Dozier" Jones; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, Jamila "Mary Ethel Dozier" Jones was born on June 5, 1944, in Montgomery,
3 Alabama, a city deeply entrenched in the struggle for civil rights and social justice; and
- 4 WHEREAS, by the age of nine, she had joined the NAACP youth group, where she learned
5 the principles of equal rights, voter empowerment, civic leadership, and personal
6 responsibility under the mentorship of Rosa Louise Parks; and
- 7 WHEREAS, at the age of 11, she became an active advocate and participant in the
8 Montgomery Bus Boycott, distributing leaflets and walking to school for 361 days, thereby
9 contributing to the historic campaign against racial segregation; and
- 10 WHEREAS, during a raid by Grundy County sheriffs at Highlander Folk School, she
11 displayed remarkable courage by singing a new verse of "We Shall Overcome," which
12 resonated throughout the nation and helped transform the song into one of America's most
13 powerful anthems for civil rights and social justice; and

14 WHEREAS, she continued her dedication to voter empowerment as a lead organizer for the
15 Montgomery Youth Voter Registration Campaign, working closely with leaders such as
16 James Bevel and James Orange to promote voter registration in Alabama; and

17 WHEREAS, in the 1960s, she moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where she founded the Vine City
18 Community School and the Harambee Singers; she further discovered a new home for her
19 community engagement and creative voice within the City of Atlanta's Department of Parks
20 and Recreation, where she was instrumental in integrating performing and visual arts into
21 recreational programs, empowering countless youth; and

22 WHEREAS, she was a prominent leader at the Voices of the Civil Rights Movement
23 Conference at the Smithsonian Institution, contributing significantly to the preservation and
24 celebration of African American sacred and freedom songs; and

25 WHEREAS, for over half a century, she remained a major cultural voice for freedom, justice,
26 and voter empowerment, tirelessly singing, teaching, and speaking out against racism and
27 inequities of all kinds.

28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
29 honor the life and legacy of Jamila "Mary Ethel Dozier" Jones, recognize her extraordinary
30 contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, and commend her enduring impact on
31 generations past, present, and future.

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
33 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the family of
34 Jamila "Mary Ethel Dozier" Jones.