

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 516

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to recognize Representative Lois DeBerry as "Speaker Pro Tempore Emeritus" of the House of Representatives.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee House of Representatives should recognize those members who have served with great distinction and who have held numerous house offices and positions for extensive durations of time; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for the Tennessee House of Representatives to establish the position of "Speaker Pro Tempore Emeritus" in appreciation of the magnitude of accomplishment, dignity, and character of Representative Lois DeBerry of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Lois DeBerry was first elected to serve the citizens of the 91st House District in 1972, and has continued to serve as their representative since such time, and although she has excelled in many different leadership positions, her priority has always been to represent her constituents in the most effective manner possible; and

WHEREAS, during her twenty terms and forty years in office, Lois DeBerry served the house and the people with distinction as Speaker Pro Tempore for twenty-four years from the 95th through 106th General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, Representative Lois DeBerry has always been an innovator and groundbreaker in government: she was the first African-American woman elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives from the City of Memphis, the first woman to serve as Chair of the Shelby County delegation, the first African-American woman elected Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives, and she was the founder and first Chair of the Annual Legislative Retreat of the Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators; and

WHEREAS, deeply committed to providing equal opportunity and equity under the law for African-Americans, Lois DeBerry serves as President Emeritus of the National Black Caucus

of State Legislators, is a member of the NAACP, P.U.S.H., N.O.B.L.E., and the Memphis Chapter of LINKS, and has served on the Governor's Minority Business Development Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, a remarkable individual who truly appreciates the responsibilities, as well as the privileges, of leadership and citizenship, Representative DeBerry has graciously donated her time and energies to a variety of noteworthy organizations, including rendering sterling service as the Board Chairperson of the State Legislative Leadership Foundation and a member of the Education Commission of the States, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Southern Regional Education Board; and

WHEREAS, Representative Lois DeBerry has received numerous awards and honors during her exemplary career, including the NBCSL Labor Roundtable Appreciation Award, the William M. Bugler Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award, the Tri-State Woman of the Year, the Outstanding Women in the Community Service Award, and the NBCSL Legislator of the Year Award; and

WHEREAS, Lois DeBerry was also listed among the 100 Most Influential African-Americans by The Kansas City Globe, and "The Lois DeBerry Correctional Institute for Special Need Offenders" was named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, a highly influential figure in her party, Representative DeBerry enjoyed the distinct honor of seconding Al Gore's nomination for Vice-President at the Democratic National Convention; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting for this body to honor the service of Lois DeBerry to her district and to the State of Tennessee; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that Representative Lois DeBerry is hereby recognized as "Speaker Pro Tempore Emeritus" of the House of Representatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Speaker Pro Tempore Emeritus shall be entitled to such benefits and privileges as are conferred by the Speaker of the House and may perform such functions and duties as are assigned by the Speaker of the House; provided, however,

nothing herein shall be construed to extend any powers or duties granted to the Speaker Pro Tempore under House Rules to the Speaker Pro Tempore Emeritus.