

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1051

By Byrd

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Shirley Ann Brewer Curry for her many valuable contributions to Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those individuals who have dedicated their professional careers and personal excellence to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Ann Brewer Curry is one such estimable person, who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, a native Tennessean, Shirley Curry was born in Clifton on January 27, 1937, to Carmack and Lorene Brewer; and

WHEREAS, she graduated from Wayne County High School in 1954 as the class valedictorian and attended Freed-Hardeman College and Troy State University, from which she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics Education; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 1956, the former Shirley Ann Brewer was joined in holy matrimony with Jesse Osteen Curry; the couple enjoyed thirty years of wedded bliss before Mr. Curry's untimely passing in 1985; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, the Currys and their three children, Elsa Lynn, Jeff, and John, moved to Haywood County, where Jesse Curry had been called to serve in a ministerial position at Brownsville Church of Christ; Shirley Curry accepted a position teaching math at Haywood County High School and proceeded to complete a Master of Science degree in Mathematics at Memphis State University; and

WHEREAS, during this time, Mrs. Curry became interested in the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which had been approved by Congress in March 1972 and was in the ratification process by the various states; and

WHEREAS, as Shirley Curry studied the amendment's potential impact on women, she joined the effort of pro-family and pro-life advocate Phyllis Schlafly to oppose the amendment's ratification and worked to educate conservative citizens on the amendment's potential negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, as a result of her and other pro-family advocates' tireless efforts, the Tennessee legislature, along with five other states, was convinced to rescind its earlier vote in favor of the ERA, thereby thwarting its passage; and

WHEREAS, building on its success, the STOP ERA organization was renamed the Eagle Forum, with Mrs. Curry remaining a founding member of its board of directors to this day; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1980s, with her children either in college or married, Mrs. Curry sought to continue her education; she was accepted into the doctoral program at Vanderbilt University, from which she ultimately attained a Ph.D. in Education; and

WHEREAS, after the unexpected death of her husband, Shirley Curry moved to Washington, D.C., and assumed the role of Director of the Recognition Division in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement under Secretary William Bennett during the Reagan administration; and

WHEREAS, drawing accolades for her focus on "keeping the main thing the main thing," Mrs. Curry soon became a trusted advisor in Washington, culminating in her rewarding tenure with the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1980s, she accepted a position working under Jack Kemp, Secretary of U.S. Housing and Urban Development; in this role, Mrs. Curry developed programs to raise awareness of parents and educators about the importance of adequate housing in urban settings and drug-free schools. That initiative later resulted in implementation of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act; and

WHEREAS, when her tenure in Washington concluded, Shirley Curry relocated to China for a year to teach English at the University of Wuhan; students quickly learned through her

unique fundamental teaching methods, and her spirit of faith and purpose fueled their confidence in return; and

WHEREAS, a woman of devout religious faith, Mrs. Curry recalls how happy she was in China, getting to know and love people from different cultures and teaching reading often through the Bible; and

WHEREAS, upon her return home to Wayne County, Shirley Curry accepted a challenge to teach math education to young men placed in group homes through an innovative learning program; later, she taught reading skills to adolescent men experiencing both academic and behavioral challenges; and

WHEREAS, a close friend and confidante to elected officials from across Tennessee and throughout the nation, Mrs. Curry has worked tirelessly on a number of political campaigns, including the 1996 presidential campaign of Steve Forbes, for which she served as a grassroots campaign manager; and

WHEREAS, the quintessential volunteer for Wayne County Republicans, Shirley Curry was named State Committee Woman for the Wayne County Republican Women, and she was honored as Republican Woman of the Year for 2010-2011; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Mrs. Curry retired as an educator from Wayne County High School and currently resides in Waynesboro; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Curry is an inspiration to all who know her, and her commitment to public service and dedication to improving the lives of all Tennesseans are worthy of recognition by this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize Shirley Ann Brewer Curry for her many contributions, applaud her tireless service to the State of Tennessee and its citizens, and extend to her our best wishes for every future success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.