

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 639

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Representative Barbara Cooper on the celebration of her ninetieth birthday.

WHEREAS, we wish to join with our colleague Representative Barbara Cooper in celebrating her birthday on August 4, 2019, which she shares with an equally gifted politician, President Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, at nearly ninety years young, Barbara Cooper is the most mature person to ever serve in the General Assembly, as far as can be ascertained; and

WHEREAS, a trailblazer in education and a dedicated public servant for many years, Representative Cooper has been a valuable member of the House of Representatives since the convening of the 100<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Representative Cooper is wholly committed to the prosperity of her constituents in House District 86 and, indeed, all citizens of the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a former chair of the Shelby County Democratic Legislative Caucus and the Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators, Representative Cooper served as secretary of the latter organization in 2017; she is currently a member of the House committees on Health and Consumer and Human Resources; and

WHEREAS, her wise counsel is sought by those who are fortunate to know her, and she has received numerous awards and accolades in recognition of her excellence as a legislator, community leader, and citizen, including the 2011 Legislator of the Year award from the Memphis Area Association of Governments and Tennessee Area Development District Association; Extraordinary Leadership award from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA) on AKA Day on the Hill; Shining Star award from the National Organization of Black Elected Legislators;

Dr. Raymond Winbush Award for Public Service; Outstanding Leadership award from National Union of American Families; Project Save-a-Student Award from Equal Opportunity Group, Inc.; Historically Black Colleges and Universities Wellness Award from LeMoyne College; AFL-CIO Leadership Award; and AFL-CIO International Award for Community Service; and

WHEREAS, for forty-two years, Barbara Cooper molded the minds and morals of children as a classroom teacher and parent coordinator with Memphis City Schools and the Catholic Diocese of Memphis; in recognition of her faithful and proficient service, she has been inducted into the Shelby County Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, she gives back to her community through her involvement with and contributions to the Shelby County Democratic Party; Education Leadership Commission; Shelby County Democratic Women; Universal African American People's Organization, which she served as co-convener; National Council of Negro Women; NAACP; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; Tennessee State University Alumni Association; Memphis Downtown Commission; Gemstone Neighborhood Association; Coalition for Organizational Protection of People and Equal Rights, for which she organized conferences and marches; Cooper/Jones Initiative for Economic and Community Development, which she founded; Harriet "Moses" Tubman National Holiday; Urban Farmers Seminar; Hip Hop Demonstration Grant in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; A. Philip Randolph Award Program; and Coalition of Community Unions; and

WHEREAS, Representative Cooper was involved in negotiations to resolve the Master Lease conflict between the City of Memphis and Beale Street, hosted the community blast-off for Governor Bill Haslam's Improve Act, and assisted in the implementation of Refurban and The Ticket Program for Shelby County Schools; and

WHEREAS, she expresses her faith as a communicant of Saint Augustine Catholic Church, where she is a member of the Social Action Committee; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Cooper is a proud graduate of Manassas High School in Memphis, and has been named Chairlady Emeritus and an honorary member of its GQ/PVL Clubs; and

WHEREAS, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Education degree from Tennessee State University and a Ph.D. in Religious Philosophy and Christian Psychology

from Jacksonville Theological Seminary; she has also completed forty-five hours of post-graduate work in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a loving mother, grandmother, and friend, Representative Cooper is most appreciative of the love and support she shares with her daughters, Joan Burnett and Tanya Cooper; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and a host of family and friends; she treasures the memory of her husband, the late Captain John Cooper of the City of Memphis Fire Department, and her son, the late Carl Cooper; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding legislators on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join with Representative Barbara Cooper in celebrating her ninetieth birthday on August 4, 2019, and extend to her our best wishes for many happy returns of the day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.