

2013-J5157

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION, commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark United States Supreme Court decision that ended school segregation

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize those milestones and significant events which represent turning points in our unique history and which are indelibly etched in the saga of our great Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark United States Supreme Court decision that ended school segregation; and

WHEREAS, On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled that "separate but equal" public schools for blacks and whites were unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, This landmark decision helped serve as a catalyst for the modern civil rights movement, inspiring education reforms across the nation and providing a basis for legal challenges to segregation in all areas of society; and

WHEREAS, Brown v. Board of Education was a consolidation of anti-segregation court cases from five different jurisdictions and included: Brown v. Board of Education (Kansas), Briggs v. Elliot (South Carolina), Bulah v. Gebhart and Belton v. Gebhart (Delaware), Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County (Virginia), and Bolling v. Sharpe (District of Columbia); and

WHEREAS, These smaller cases were combined as part of a legal movement to remedy the grossly inadequate conditions in segregated black schools; they sought to overturn the infamous 1896 case of Plessy v. Ferguson which had permitted racial segregation under the guise of "separate but

equal"; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court's Brown decision was particularly important for how it focused on the illegality of segregation itself; the court ruled that even if tangible factors like facilities, teachers and supplies were equal, separation itself was inherently unequal and a violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court's unanimous opinion concluded that a quality education was crucial for all children and ruled that it was the state's responsibility to ensure educational equality; the Court also noted that segregation has a detrimental effect upon children of color and that the impact is more profound when it has the sanction of the law; and

WHEREAS, After Brown v. Board of Education, the nation made great strides toward opening the doors of education to all students; with court orders and active enforcement of federal civil rights laws, progress toward integrated schools continued to move forward; more work is needed however, to ensure educational achievement and opportunity for all; and

WHEREAS, Equal access to educational opportunities in our nation's public schools is vitally important to both the social and economic well-being of our nation, as well as the success of our democracy as a whole; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark United States Supreme Court decision that ended school segregation.