

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Representative Lois DeBerry of Shelby County.

WHEREAS, Representative Lois DeBerry was appointed to the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in March 2013 and served as a member of the Commission until her death, it is fitting that the members should pause to remember the exemplary life of this extraordinary public servant and individual; and

WHEREAS, Representative DeBerry graduated from Hamilton High School in 1962 and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from Lemoyne-Owen College in 1971; and

WHEREAS, Representative DeBerry began her career in public service in 1972, serving as the first African American woman elected to House of Representatives from the city of Memphis, the first woman chairperson of the Shelby County Democratic Caucus, and founder and chairperson of the Annual Legislative Retreat of Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators; and

WHEREAS, Representative DeBerry served as House member of the 88th through 108th General Assemblies, House Speaker Pro Tempore for the 95th through 106th General Assemblies, Chairman of the Special Committee to Study Integration of Ex-Offenders into Mainstream of Society, and as a member of the House Education Committee; House Finance, Ways and Means Committee; House Finance, Ways and Means Sub-Committee; and

WHEREAS, Representative Lois DeBerry also served as a member of the Health and Human Resources Committee, Government Operations Committee, Select Committee on Children and Youth, Committee on Rules, Oversight Committee on Corrections, Ethics Committee, Oversight Committee on TennCare, House Committee to Study School Safety Issues, Governor's Minority Business Development Advisory Committee, and the Governor's Juvenile Justice Reform Commission; and

WHEREAS, as a life-long public servant and a source of knowledge and expertise in state government, Representative DeBerry was respected nationally by colleagues and constituents and lent her time and talent to a number of worthy organizations, including service with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; service on the board of directors of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation and the executive committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures; and service as President Emeritus of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators; and

WHEREAS, TACIR Chairman, Senator Mark Norris, commenting on working with Representative DeBerry said, "Hers is a great loss in our community; she will not easily be replaced nor soon forgotten; her legacy is lasting;" and

WHEREAS, House Speaker Beth Harwell said of Representative DeBerry, "Lois DeBerry dedicated her life to service from the Civil Rights Movement, to becoming the first female African-American Speaker Pro Tempore, Lois always made public service priority; the impact she has had on this great state, the lives of countless Tennesseans, and people all across the country is astounding; she certainly made her mark on history, and it was an honor to know her and serve alongside her in Tennessee General Assembly; I valued our friendship, and will deeply miss her sage advice, and her remarkable spirit and smile; and her dedication to children's issues, women's issues, and criminal justice reform have resulted in a better Tennessee."

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TENNESSEE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, that we hereby honor the memory of Shelby County Representative Lois DeBerry, reflecting fondly upon her exceptional service to the people of Shelby County and the State of Tennessee and upon her stalwart commitment to living her life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our most heartfelt condolences to the family of Representative Lois DeBerry.