

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R486 BPG-D

H.C.R. 5
By: Cole et al. (West)
Administration
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

A towering figure in the Texas Legislature and the United States Congress, Houston native Barbara Jordan blazed a remarkable trail on the national stage for other women and people of color. Barbara Charline Jordan was born in 1936 and graduated from Texas Southern University and Boston University School of Law. In 1966, she became the first African American woman elected to the Texas Senate, and she pushed through bills establishing antidiscrimination clauses in business contracts, the Texas Fair Employment Practices Commission, and the state's first minimum wage law. Recognizing her wisdom and skill, her peers chose her as president pro tempore.

Barbara Jordan continued her work to advance social progress after winning election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1972, when she became the first African American woman from the Deep South to be elected to Congress. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, she galvanized the nation during the Watergate hearings, signaling the historic weight of the proceedings as she thundered, "My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total. I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution."

Following her third term in the house, Congresswoman Jordan retired from politics to take up the Lyndon Johnson Chair in National Policy at The University of Texas at Austin's LBJ School of Public Affairs. She inspired the next generation of leaders by teaching courses on intergovernmental relations, political values, and ethics, and she served as ethics advisor to then-governor Ann Richards. Appointed chair of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, she again emerged as a key supporter of the framers' intent in 1994 when she powerfully decried a proposal to end the constitutional provision of birthright citizenship. Barbara Jordan passed away in 1996, but the magisterial voice she lifted as a champion of the vulnerable and disenfranchised and as a defender of the constitution continues to resonate, and naming a new building in the Capitol Complex in her honor would provide a fitting tribute to her enormous legacy.

RESOLVED

That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby direct the Texas Facilities Commission to name the building being constructed on the east side of North Congress Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets the Barbara Jordan Building in recognition of her contributions to our state and nation.

That the secretary of state forward an official copy of this resolution to the chair and to the executive director of the Texas Facilities Commission.