

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1523

Recognizing the 100th anniversary of Booker T. Washington High School
in Atlanta, Georgia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia (for herself, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Mr. CARTER of Georgia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 100th anniversary of Booker T. Washington
High School in Atlanta, Georgia.

Whereas, when it was constructed in 1924, Booker T. Washington High School became the first public high school for Black students in Atlanta;

Whereas Booker T. Washington High School remained the only public Black high school in the city until 1947;

Whereas public education had existed in Atlanta since 1872, and the lack of school buildings for Black students was purposefully designed to block access to education for Black individuals;

Whereas Atlanta's Black community fought for the right to a public education, helping to pass school bond referen-

dums in 1903 and 1910 with the promise that the funds raised would be used to build a Black high school;

Whereas no such school was constructed following the passage of either referendum;

Whereas, in 1919, the NAACP and Black community leaders conducted a successful voter registration drive, and newly registered Black voters used their newfound political power to defeat a new school bond referendum;

Whereas Black voters, having demonstrated their political might, helped pass a school bond referendum in 1921 based on the promise that the funds would be used to build Black schools;

Whereas the school board pledged \$1,290,000 for the construction of Black schools following the 1921 referendum;

Whereas construction was completed on January 29, 1924, and the first public Black high school in Atlanta opened on September 8, 1924;

Whereas the school was fittingly named after Booker T. Washington, the revered leader and educator;

Whereas Booker T. Washington High School initially offered standard high school academic subjects and vocational training;

Whereas the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School, Charles L. Harper, and his dedicated faculty, set high expectations for their students and supplemented their education by leading educational tours, creating athletics, music, and drama programs, and erecting a statue of Booker T. Washington at the front of the school;

Whereas Black students from across the State of Georgia attended Booker T. Washington High School because of the quality of the education it provided and the lack of educational opportunities elsewhere in the State;

Whereas Booker T. Washington High School quickly became a cornerstone of Atlanta's Black community;

Whereas, throughout the years, Booker T. Washington High School has continued to serve as a beacon of light in the community, serving as a meeting space for alumni groups, community and civic organizations, and high school, collegiate, and semiprofessional sports leagues;

Whereas Graham W. Jackson became the school's first band director in 1928 and built the Booker T. Washington High School band into one of the finest high school music programs in the country;

Whereas the Booker T. Washington High School marching band has received numerous honors, including three Certificates of Merit from Atlanta's mayors, and has performed on some of the biggest stages in Atlanta and across the country;

Whereas the school's marching band became the first high school marching band to perform on national television during the 1969 Coaches All-America Game, has also performed during Atlanta Falcons and Atlanta Hawks halftime shows and the 1988 Democratic National Convention, and has been featured in the films "School Daze" and "Drumline";

Whereas visitors to Booker T. Washington High School include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, activist Jesse Jackson, civil rights icon Rosa Parks, and President George W. Bush;

Whereas alumni of Booker T. Washington High School have gone on to achieve great success and include—

- (1) civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;
 - (2) Judge Romae T. Powell;
 - (3) surgeon Dr. Asa Yancey;
 - (4) former Secretary for Health and Human Services Dr. Louis Sullivan;
 - (5) Georgia State Legislator “Able” Mable Thomas;
- and
- (6) educator Dr. Pearlie Craft Dove;

Whereas, in 1986, Booker T. Washington High School was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, recognizing the school’s historic, cultural, architectural, and artistic value; and

Whereas, on September 16, 2024, Booker T. Washington High School and the broader Atlanta community gathered at Atlanta City Hall to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the school’s opening, and additional celebrations will take place throughout the school year: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the 100th anniversary of Booker
3 T. Washington High School’s opening;

4 (2) applauds the determination, perseverance,
5 and political savvy of the Atlanta Black community
6 in organizing to ensure that funds were provided to
7 construct a Black public high school;

8 (3) celebrates the historic, educational, and cul-
9 tural impact that Booker T. Washington High

1 School and its alumni have had on Atlanta, Georgia,
2 the United States, and the world; and

3 (4) calls on Booker T. Washington High
4 School's current students, teachers, and administra-
5 tors to continue striving for greatness.

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