

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR.
TERESA P. HUGHES

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 25, 2011

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Congressman BERMAN, Congresswoman BASS of California, Congresswoman WATERS, Congresswoman HAHN, and Congresswoman RICHARDSON, to honor the extraordinary life of Dr. Teresa Hughes, the trailblazing Democratic state senator and assemblywoman who spent 25 years in the California Legislature championing education policy and reform. As the second African American woman ever elected to the Legislature, Dr. Hughes broke barriers for women and people of color during a long career marked by astute leadership and tireless advocacy. Dr. Hughes and her husband of 30 years, Dr. Frank Staggers, Sr., have been stalwart members of the Bay Area and Los Angeles communities for many years. With her passing on November 13, 2011, we are reminded of the joy Dr. Hughes inspired and the powerful legacy of her life's work.

Born in New York City on October 3, 1931, Dr. Hughes grew up in Harlem and earned a bachelor's degree in physiology and public health from Hunter College. After earning her master's in education administration from New York University, she completed a doctorate in

education administration at Claremont Graduate School. A former New York social worker, teacher and school administrator, Dr. Hughes moved to Los Angeles in 1969 to finish her doctorate. She worked as an assistant professor of education at California State Los Angeles, and briefly as an assistant to then State Senator Mervyn Dymally.

In 1975, she was elected to California's 47th Assembly District, representing the greater Los Angeles area. Just one of three women in the 120-member Legislature at the time, and one of only seven African Americans, Dr. Hughes spent the next 17 years fighting for education and social justice initiatives. She authored an Assembly bill dedicating \$800 million in bond money for school construction and the creation of a California School of the Arts. In 1982, she authored a bill that established the Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, CARE, program, of which now there are 113 programs throughout the state serving low-income individuals and families. And in 1983, while chairing the Assembly Education Committee, she co-authored an education bill that set state graduation standards, raised teacher salaries and requirements, and lengthened the school day and year. She also wrote a bill that established the California Museum of Afro-American History and Culture within the Museum of Science and Industry in Los Angeles.

When, in 1985, the Joint Rules Committee formally recognized the new bipartisan Caucus of Women Legislators, comprising just 15

women state lawmakers in office, Dr. Hughes was selected to chair the caucus as the most senior woman legislator. And, after Dr. Hughes was elected to the 25th Senate District in 1992, she established the Senate Select Committee on College Admission and Outreach and wrote a school violence prevention bill that led to the Task Force on School Safety. Before she was termed out in 2000, the ever-pioneering Dr. Hughes became the first woman and first African American to serve on the Senate Rules Committee.

A member of many associations throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Hughes founded Aware Women of California, was a member of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Board of Trustees, was Legislative Consultant for the State Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing and, until just recently, was a member of the Nehemiah Corporation of America Board of Directors. Her namesake was dedicated to the Teresa Hughes Elementary School in 1988.

Today, California's 9th, 28th, 33rd, 35th, 36th and 37th Congressional Districts salute and honor a friend and an outstanding human being, Dr. Teresa P. Hughes. The State of California is truly indebted to her many civic contributions over the years. Our thoughts are with Dr. Staggers, Sr., their family, and Teresa's extended group of loved ones as we celebrate her incredible life. May she rest in peace.

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