

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 621

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, October 14, 2020

WHEREAS, the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a trailblazing leader for women in the legal profession who became the second woman and the first Jewish woman to serve as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and made notable contributions to American jurisprudence in the areas of gender equality and civil liberties during her 27 years on the bench, died from complications related to pancreatic cancer at her Washington, D.C., home on September 18, 2020; and

WHEREAS, born Joan Ruth Bader, Ruth Bader Ginsburg grew up in New York City and graduated from James Madison High School in Brooklyn, then earned a bachelor's degree in government from Cornell University as the highest-ranking female student in the Class of 1954; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg began working for the United States Social Security Administration but was demoted when she became pregnant with her first child; she subsequently enrolled at Harvard Law School, where she encountered instances of gender discrimination as one of only nine women in a class of about 500 students, and later transferred to Columbia Law School, where she graduated tied for first in her class in 1959; and

WHEREAS, after a two-year clerkship for a district court judge, Ruth Bader Ginsburg worked in academia and went on to become the first woman to achieve tenure at Columbia Law School; she continued to experience gender discrimination, including when she joined Rutgers Law School as a professor and was paid less than male colleagues due to the fact that her husband was also employed; and

WHEREAS, a keen litigator and persuasive advocate who was driven by her own experiences with gender discrimination, Ruth Bader Ginsburg cofounded the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union and argued multiple cases before the Supreme Court of the United States; her visionary legal strategies led to significant advancements for women's rights and enhanced the understanding of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed as a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and cultivated a reputation as a moderate jurist who worked diligently to build consensus on the bench; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was nominated by President Bill Clinton to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court of the United States and was sworn in on August 10, 1993, becoming the first Jewish justice on the nation's highest court since 1969 and only the second female justice; and

WHEREAS, often favoring a measured approach to steady and incremental change, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was nevertheless an unyielding advocate for gender equality and social justice throughout her time on the court; and

WHEREAS, among her most notable opinions, Ruth Bader Ginsburg authored the majority decision in *United States v. Virginia*, a historic 7-1 ruling that struck down the male-only admissions policy at the Virginia Military Institute, which at that time was the last remaining public institution of higher education to only admit men; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote other majority opinions related to discrimination against people with mental disabilities in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, standing to sue for damages related to industrial pollution in *Friends of the Earth v. Laidlaw Environmental Services*, and partisan gerrymandering in *Arizona State Legislature v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission*; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that a clear and firm dissent could provide a strong basis for a future majority opinion, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was well known for her dissenting opinions, such as those in *Bush v. Gore*, *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, *Gonzales v. Carhart*, and *Shelby County v. Holder*; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a trusted mentor to countless women attorneys and judges, and in addition to earning respect for her legal acumen, she became a cultural icon for her unparalleled wit and signature sense of style, inspiring generations of women to pursue leadership roles regardless of their chosen career paths; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by her husband, Martin, Ruth Bader Ginsburg will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her children, Jane and James, and their families, and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an influential associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; and, be

it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.