

## 2021 SESSION

ENROLLED

### SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 89

*Commending Tressie McMillan Cottom.*

Agreed to by the Senate, January 14, 2021

WHEREAS, Tressie McMillan Cottom, an esteemed professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a former member of the faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University, received the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the MacArthur Foundation bestowed the MacArthur Fellowship, colloquially known as the "genius grant," upon Tressie McMillan Cottom for "shaping discourse on highly topical issues at the confluence of race, gender, education, and digital technology for broad audiences"; and

WHEREAS, after earning a doctorate in sociology from Emory University's Laney Graduate School in 2015, Tressie McMillan Cottom taught at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she developed the school's Race, Place, and Space Initiative, a community of scholars and artists that advanced the study of race and racism in society through a lecture series and "unConference" events; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Tressie McMillan Cottom adapted her doctoral thesis into her first book, *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*, providing a vital study of how societal inequalities fueled the growth of for-profit colleges and shaped the higher education landscape in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, in her 2019 collection of essays, a National Book Award finalist entitled *THICK: And Other Essays*, Tressie McMillan Cottom applies ethnographic research methods and draws from the Black feminist intellectual tradition to provide penetrating insights into the lives of Black women in America today; and

WHEREAS, Tressie McMillan Cottom is currently a member of the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she serves as an associate professor in the School of Information and Library Science and as a senior research fellow at the Center for Information, Technology and Public Life; she is also a faculty affiliate at the Harvard University Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society; and

WHEREAS, as an author, professor, and co-host of the podcast *Hear to Slay*, as well as through news columns, television appearances, congressional testimonies, and a Twitter following of more than 150,000, Tressie McMillan Cottom has brought greater awareness to the myriad social problems impacting our world, while demonstrating how academics and intellectuals may effectively contribute to the public discourse; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Tressie McMillan Cottom, a distinguished professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a leading intellectual in the study of race, gender, education, and digital technology, hereby be commended for receiving a 2020 MacArthur Fellowship; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Tressie McMillan Cottom as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's heartfelt admiration for her inspiring and meritorious accomplishments.

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