

1995 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 710

Offered February 13, 1995

Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the election of the nation's first female state legislators.

Patrons—Keating, Christian, Connally, Cooper, Crittenden, Crouch, Cunningham, Darner, Puller, Rhodes, Sherwood and Van Landingham; Senators: Howell, Lucas, Miller, Y.B. and Woods

Consent to introduce

WHEREAS, on January 2, 1895, Carrie Clyde Holly, Frances Klock, and Clara Cressingham were sworn in as members of the Colorado State House of Representatives, the first women ever elected to a state legislature in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Carrie Holly later became the first woman to introduce a bill, Clara Cressingham the first woman to fill a leadership position, and Frances Klock the first woman to chair a committee; and

WHEREAS, the three Colorado legislators also initiated and supported successful legislation giving mothers equal rights with fathers to their children, raising the age of consent from 16 to 18, and creating a home for delinquent girls; and

WHEREAS, other states, primarily in the West, soon followed Colorado's lead, and by the turn of the twentieth century, Utah and Idaho had elected women legislators; and

WHEREAS, the trend gradually spread eastward, with Midwestern, New England, and Southern states electing women to their state legislatures, until Louisiana, in 1936, became the last state to elect a woman legislator; and

WHEREAS, 100 years after the momentous event in Colorado, slightly over 20 percent of state legislators are women, with the Western states of Washington, Arizona, and Colorado still leading the way with the highest percentages; and

WHEREAS, from the original three—Holly, Cressingham, and Klock—to the over 1,500 women state legislators today, it has been a slow and arduous process, with women overcoming entrenched male dominance of the political process and, in some cases, legal barriers to women in high office; and

WHEREAS, on the centennial of the election of the first three female legislators in the nation's history, it is appropriate both to reflect upon the many contributions of women to the legislative process over the past century and to reemphasize the need for more skilled, professional, and competent women to fill leadership roles in the legislatures of the 21st century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the 100th anniversary of the election of Carrie Clyde Holly, Clara Cressingham, and Frances Klock, the first women ever to serve in a state legislature.

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