

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 355

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Boston's celebration of the Little Rock Nine on the 50th anniversary of their courageous and selfless stand in the face of hatred, violence, and intolerance.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 24, 2007

Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Boston's celebration of the Little Rock Nine on the 50th anniversary of their courageous and selfless stand in the face of hatred, violence, and intolerance.

Whereas, on October 24, 2007, the legacy of the Little Rock Nine will be celebrated in Boston's Faneuil Hall;

Whereas, in Faneuil Hall, abolitionists of the 19th Century publicly attacked the evils of slavery in the United States;

Whereas Massachusetts was the center of the United States abolitionist movement and a national leader in providing public education to all students, regardless of race or ethnicity;

Whereas abolitionist leader and Newburyport, Massachusetts native William Lloyd Garrison fueled the abolitionist

movement through his powerful writing in his newspaper, “The Liberator”, and fiery public oratory;

Whereas the “Father of American public education”, Franklin, Massachusetts native Horace Mann, advocated for the end of slavery and improved access for all students to quality public education;

Whereas, in 1832, Garrison and other abolitionists gathered at the African Meeting House on Boston’s Beacon Hill and founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society;

Whereas, in 1855, the Massachusetts legislature outlawed segregation in the State’s public schools;

Whereas, on May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling in the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka and declared that segregated education was unconstitutional;

Whereas many elementary and high schools and colleges and universities throughout the United States continued to enforce a system of educational inequality in which students of color were denied access to their right to a quality public education;

Whereas, 3 years after the ruling in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, the school board of Little Rock, Arkansas, announced it would implement a gradual integration of its school system beginning in September 1957;

Whereas the Little Rock chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People selected 9 outstanding African-American students to attend previously all-White Little Rock Central High School;

Whereas, on September 4, 1957, those 9 African-American students, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray,

Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls attempted to enter Central High School;

Whereas, on September 4, 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus mobilized the Arkansas National Guard and ordered the armed soldiers to block the 9 African-American students from entering Central High School;

Whereas, after a Federal judge ordered Governor Faubus to remove the National Guard, police officers and citizens of Little Rock took up positions at the entrances to Central High School and continued to block the African-American students from entering;

Whereas, on September 23, 1957, after learning that the 9 African-American students had successfully entered the school, a segregationist mob gathered at Central High School and the African-American students had to be escorted from the school for fear that they would be killed;

Whereas, on September 23, 1957, Little Rock Mayor Woodrow Mann, in a telegram to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, appealed to the President to send Federal troops to protect the students and ensure the integration of Central High School;

Whereas, on September 24, 1957, President Eisenhower ordered the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army to Little Rock and federalized the entire Arkansas National Guard;

Whereas, on September 25, 1957, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls walked through the front doors of Central High School, as thousands of White students had done before them;

Whereas despite the constant presence of United States soldiers, the 9 African-American students were physically and verbally harassed throughout the school year;

Whereas Minnijean Brown, after enduring months of physical and verbal harassment and assaults, was expelled from Central High School for a verbal retort aimed at one of her antagonists;

Whereas, at the end of the 1957–1958 school year, Ernest Green became the first African-American graduate in the history of Central High School;

Whereas Minnijean Brown Trickery became a prominent social activist and works as a writer and social worker in Ontario, Canada;

Whereas Ernest Green attended Michigan State University, later served as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Affairs under President Jimmy Carter, and currently is a managing partner and vice president of Lehman Brothers;

Whereas Elizabeth Eckford had a successful career in the same United States Army that protected her at Central High School, raised 2 sons in Little Rock, and now works as a social worker;

Whereas Thelma Mothershed-Wair returned to school as a teacher and now volunteers in a program for abused women;

Whereas Melba Pattillo Beals is an author and journalist for People Magazine and NBC Universal;

Whereas Gloria Ray Karlmark graduated from Illinois Technical College and is a successful computer science writer whose work has been published in 39 countries;

Whereas Terrence Roberts is now Dr. Terrence Roberts and teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and Antioch College and also works as a clinical psychologist;

Whereas Jefferson Thomas graduated from Central High School in 1960 and works for the Department of Defense as an accountant;

Whereas Carlotta Walls Lanier graduated from Central High School in 1959, attended Michigan State University, and has found success in the field of real estate;

Whereas the Little Rock Nine, in brave defiance of segregation, proved that with access to educational opportunity all students are capable of greatness, regardless of race or ethnicity;

Whereas the courage of the Little Rock Nine, broadcast for the entire world to see, inspired other students of all colors to take a stand on behalf of tolerance, integration, and equality;

Whereas the courage of the Little Rock Nine demonstrated to segregationists throughout the United States that hatred and intolerance were no match for the bravery of 9 high school students; and

Whereas, 50 years after the integration of Central High School, all Americans must remain vigilant in order to ensure that every child has access to quality public education, regardless of race or ethnicity: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) joins with the people of Massachusetts in

3 honoring the courage of the Little Rock Nine;

1 (2) pledges to advance the legacy of the Little
2 Rock Nine;

3 (3) endeavors to ensure that no American is de-
4 nied access to education because of race or ethnicity;
5 and

6 (4) encourages the people of the United States
7 to remember—

8 (A) the courage of the Little Rock Nine;
9 and

10 (B) the vital importance of equal oppor-
11 tunity in education.

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