

## **2011-K1159**

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION paying tribute to the late Shirley Chisholm and commemorating the 40th Anniversary of her historic run for President of the United States of America

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those distinguished and patriotic individuals for whom the pursuit of justice, the preservation of human rights, and the protection of the public welfare is a calling and therefore a way of life; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to the late Shirley Chisholm and to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of her historic run for President of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, A distinguished congresswoman, scholar, and African American spokeswoman, Shirley Anita Chisholm was the first black woman elected to the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, A dynamic public speaker who boldly challenged traditional politics, "Fighting Shirley Chisholm," as she called herself during her first congressional campaign, championed liberal legislation from her seat in the House beginning with her inauguration in 1968 and continuing until her retirement in 1982; and

WHEREAS, Admirers and foes alike dubbed her the Pepperpot because of her fondness for saying, "I breathe fire"; in 1972, she campaigned for the Democratic presidential nomination; and

WHEREAS, On January 25, 1972, Shirley Chisholm became the first major-party black candidate to run for President of the United States of America; in that same year, she was the first woman to run for her party's presidential nomination; and

WHEREAS, During the campaign, Shirley Chisholm survived three assassination attempts; she ran for the office in spite of the hopeless odds to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Chisholm's brave run for president paved the way for candidates such as Barack Obama to run for president; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable woman was born Shirley Anita St. Hill on November 30, 1924, in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn; her father, Charles Christopher St. Hill, was an emigrant from Guyana, who worked as a laborer, and her mother, Ruby Seale, was a native of Barbados, who was a seamstress and a domestic worker; and

WHEREAS, Extraordinary circumstances separated Shirley Chisholm from her parents for much of her early childhood; she resided with her grandmother on the island of Barbados until 1934, when she rejoined her family in the United States at the age of 11; and

WHEREAS, An important influence on her early life, Shirley Chisholm's grandmother, Emaline Seale, instilled in her the significant values of pride, courage, and faith; and

WHEREAS, Graduating with an excellent academic record from a Brooklyn girls' high school, Shirley Chisholm earned a scholarship to study sociology at Brooklyn College; she quickly became active in political circles, joining the Harriet Tubman Society, serving as an Urban League volunteer, and winning prizes in debate; and

WHEREAS, The committed interest in her community led her to attend city meetings, where, as a student, she astonished older adults by confronting civic leaders with questions about the quality of government services to her predominantly black neighborhood; while beginning to establish her profile in her community, she also impressed her professors with a powerful speaking style and was encouraged to enter politics; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Chisholm received her sociology degree with honors in 1946; while working in a nursery school, she studied for a master's degree in elementary education at Columbia University where she met Conrad Chisholm, whom she married in 1949; and

WHEREAS, Two years later, Shirley Chisholm received her master's degree in early childhood education; over the next decade she built a reputation as an authority on early education and child welfare; and

WHEREAS, She served as the director of the Friends Day Nursery, in Brownsville, New York, and, from 1953 to 1959, of the Hamilton-Madison Child Care Center, in Lower Manhattan; and

WHEREAS, Taking her expertise into the public sector, Shirley Chisholm became an educational consultant in New York City's Bureau of Child Welfare from 1959 to 1964; in addition to her professional work, she

participated in a variety of community and civic activities; and  
WHEREAS, From 1964 to 1968, Shirley Chisholm served as a New York State Assemblywoman, spearheaded legislation providing for state-funded daycare centers and for unemployment insurance for domestic workers; and  
WHEREAS, In 1968, Shirley Chisholm became the first African American woman to run for the U.S. Congress; in her pursuit of the Democratic nomination for the 12th District, she bested two other African American candidates and was appointed New York's National Committee representative at the party's national convention; and  
WHEREAS, Shirley Chisholm wrote her autobiography UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED in 1970; she also wrote THE GOOD FIGHT in 1973; and  
WHEREAS, In 1971, along with such feminist leaders as author Gloria Steinem, Shirley Chisholm helped found the National Women's Political Caucus; and  
WHEREAS, Following her reelection to the House in the fall of 1972, Shirley Chisholm served every two-year term until 1982; in addition to supporting women's equality, she was instrumental in advancing welfare legislation designed to help poor and needy citizens; and  
WHEREAS, On February 10, 1982, Shirley Chisholm announced her retirement; she then accepted an invitation to join the faculty at Mount Holyoke, the United States' oldest women's college, where she taught courses in political science and women's studies until 1987; and  
WHEREAS, Although she had left Washington, D.C, Shirley Chisholm remained active in politics; in 1985, she became the first president of the newly formed National Political Congress of Black Women, which in three years grew, from 500 to 8,500 members; and  
WHEREAS, Using her retirement to give speeches and commencement addresses on vital issues, Shirley Chisholm continued to inspire the public imagination; she was the recipient of many awards and honorary degrees; and  
WHEREAS, Shirley Chisholm, throughout her career and life, served her community and the people of the State of New York with intelligence and caring dedication, continuously striving to fulfill the duties of her position, and contributing significantly to the legislative process and the quality of life of her constituents and the communities of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it  
RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to pay tribute to the late Shirley Chisholm and to commemorate the 40th Anni-

versary of her historic run for President of the United States of America; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the New York State Legislative Women's Caucus, and the National Women's History Museum, 205 S. Whiting Street Suite 254, Alexandria, Virginia 22304.