

By: Representatives Dickson, Fleming

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 45

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING MRS. MARY LOUISE SMITH-WARE FOR HER
2 REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

3 WHEREAS, Mrs. Mary Louise Smith-Ware, an unheralded heroine
4 of the Civil Rights Movement, was instrumental in ending
5 segregation by volunteering to legally challenge segregation in
6 Montgomery, Alabama; and

7 WHEREAS, a resident of Montgomery, Alabama, where she was
8 born in 1937 to her loving parents, the late Frank and Alberta
9 Smith, Mrs. Smith-Ware graduated from St. Jude Educational
10 Institute; and

11 WHEREAS, Mrs. Smith-Ware, on October 21, 1955, at the age of
12 18, was returning home on the city line bus in Montgomery when she
13 was ordered to relinquish her seat to a white passenger, and upon
14 her refusal, was arrested and jailed for failure to obey
15 segregation orders; and

16 WHEREAS, it is notable that Mrs. Smith-Ware's arrest was some
17 40 days prior to the arrest of Rosa Parks, who was also arrested
18 and jailed for a similar incident; and

19 WHEREAS, Mrs. Smith-Ware volunteered to become a plaintiff in
20 the landmark federal class action suit of *Browder vs. Gayle*, which
21 was filed on February 1, 1956, by attorneys Fred Gray and Charles
22 Langford; and

23 WHEREAS, the law suit claimed that the City of Montgomery,
24 the State of Alabama, and the National City Bus Lines were
25 operating city buses in violation of the 14th Amendment of the
26 United States Constitution; and

27 WHEREAS, in addition to Mrs. Smith-Ware, there were also four
28 other heroine plaintiffs who were jailed for similar incidents and
29 they are as follows: 33-year-old Aurelia Browder, 77-year-old
30 Susie McDonald, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin and Jeanette Reese;
31 and

32 WHEREAS, on December 20, 1956, the United States Supreme
33 Court ruled in *Browder vs. Gayle* unanimously upholding the ruling
34 of a lower court that legally ended the practice of racial and all
35 forms of discrimination; and

36 WHEREAS, due to the brave actions of Mrs. Smith-Ware, the
37 State of Alabama and eventually the entire country was forced to
38 recognize and respect the American ideal of equality, fair
39 treatment, equal justice and due process of law, regardless of
40 race, national origin, creed, gender or religion; and

41 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
42 recognize the contributions of outstanding individuals such as
43 Mrs. Smith-Ware whose brave and legendary actions in the Civil
44 Rights Movement not only benefited African Americans but every
45 American of this great country:

46 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
47 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
48 commend Mrs. Mary Louise Smith-Ware for her groundbreaking
49 contributions in the Civil Rights Movement and extend warmest
50 wishes for continued success in all of her future endeavors.

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
52 furnished to Mrs. Mary Louise Smith-Ware and to the members of the
53 Capitol Press Corps.