



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: President Scott

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning Honoring United States Representative Elijah Cummings

For the purpose of paying tribute to the life of Congressman Elijah Cummings and expressing appreciation for the many contributions he made to Baltimore City and for his many years of exemplary service to the citizens of Baltimore.

Recitals

On October 17, 2019, Baltimore City was saddened by the news of the passing of Elijah Cummings, the Congressman for the 7th Congressional District, which encompasses a significant portion of Baltimore City.

Born to a family of southern sharecroppers, factory workers, and Baptist preachers, Cummings was raised in West Baltimore and integrated a local swimming pool, while under attack, when he was 11. Cummings graduated from Baltimore City College and Howard University before earning his Juris Doctorate at the University of Maryland School of Law.

Congressman Cummings was a man who devoted his life to serving the people of Baltimore and the State of Maryland. His life in public service began, in 1983, when he was elected as a Delegate representing the 44th District of Baltimore City in the Maryland General Assembly. During this time he helped groups like Fayette Street Outreach turn ideas into reality, such as through the creation of a community center. He also led the push to pass the nation's first ban on alcohol and tobacco ads on inner city billboards. While in the Maryland General Assembly, his leadership and advocacy did not go unnoticed. In 1984, he became Chair of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus. By 1995, Cummings had ascended to the rank of Speaker Pro Tem, making him the first African American in Maryland history to hold a position of such distinction. As Speaker Pro Tem, Cummings held the second highest position in the Maryland House of Delegates.

Since April of 1996, Cummings represented the 7th Congressional District of Maryland in the United States House of Representatives. In 2019, he became the Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform. Some other notable accomplishments of his time in the House of Representatives include leading the Congressional Black Caucus in 2003 and 2004 and his ongoing fight for voting rights.

Cummings stressed the importance of people working together to further justice. When the 2015 Baltimore City uprising began, Congressman Cummings took to the streets, bullhorn in hand, to restore peace. He marched arm and arm with residents in the streets singing “This Little Light of Mine.” During his sermon at Freddie Gray’s funeral, Representative Cummings warned, “Our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see, but now our children are sending us to a future they will never see! There’s something wrong with that picture!” Representative Cummings cultivated and mentored the next generation of leaders. He was fond of saying “There is something about pain as a driving force... Through your pain, you will find your passion, and through your passion, you will find your purpose.”

Congressman Cummings represented the best of Baltimore and of our democracy. He elevated our hopes and challenged us all to strive for a better future. Whether it was sponsoring the HIV Prevention Outreach of 1997, the Violence Against Women Act of 1999, focusing on protecting his constituents from foreclosure, or defending the Affordable Care Act, each and every day Congressman Cummings gave his all to the citizens of Baltimore, the State of Maryland and the United States of America. He was an integral part of our Democracy in America, and his legacy will not be forgotten.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the City Council pays tribute to the life of Congressman Elijah Cummings and expresses appreciation for the many contributions he made to Baltimore City and for his many years of exemplary service to the citizens of Baltimore.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the family of Congressman Cummings, the Mayor, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.