

A RESOLUTION honoring Thelma Stovall during Women's History Month.

WHEREAS, Thelma Stovall was born in Munfordville, Kentucky, on April 1, 1919; and

WHEREAS, Thelma Stovall grew up working for the Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corporation during the Great Depression, and became involved in politics in early adulthood; and

WHEREAS, Thelma Stovall went on to graduate from the Louisville Girls' High School and the LaSalle Extension University of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Thelma Stovall entered into a celebrated life of public service to this Commonwealth and its citizens. She was elected into the Kentucky House of Representatives in 1950, and also served as the Secretary of State in 1956, 1964, and 1972, and as the Kentucky State Treasurer in 1960 and 1968; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Thelma Stovall was the first woman to be nominated for the Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky, and ran for Governor of Kentucky in 1979 before losing to John Y. Brown Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Thelma Stovall was a passionate advocate of the Equal Rights Amendment, arguing that women should no longer be treated as "second class citizens," and for such progressive issues as the equal treatment of homosexuality and African Americans in this Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for this honorable body on this day to honor a true daughter of Kentucky, Thelma Stovall, for all that she has done for Kentucky and for the impact she left upon this General Assembly and the people of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, women have, throughout history, faced hardship and discrimination, but have continued to believe in the unique promise of America; and

WHEREAS, this promise is celebrated in March, which is Women's History Month. The celebration dates back to International Women's Day in 1911, and was brought formally into being by President Jimmy Carter in February 1980; and

WHEREAS, the Presidential Proclamation stated, "From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength, and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well. As Dr. Gerda Lerner has noted, Women's History is Women's Right.' It is an essential and indispensable heritage from which we can draw pride, comfort, courage, and long-range vision. I ask my fellow Americans to recognize this heritage with appropriate activities during National Women's History Week...I urge libraries, schools, and community organizations to focus their observances on the leaders who struggled for equality - Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, and Alice Paul. Understanding the true history of our country will help us to comprehend the need for full equality under the law for all our people"; and

WHEREAS, for too long women have been excluded from participation in our democracy. Because of the courage of women in Kentucky and across this nation, women like Thelma Stovall, who rewrote the rules of what it means to be a woman and to be a legislator, Kentucky is a better and more equal place to live, to work, and to raise a family; and

WHEREAS, Women's History Month is a proper celebration of equality and freedom and anti-discrimination. It is an embodiment of all that is vital about our society, of America's fair and equal labor practices, and of the rightful and courageous progress women have made throughout the 20th and 21st centuries; and

WHEREAS, this progress has been embodied in such sectors as hiring, technology, and education; in the arts; and in mathematics and science. It is shown through the continuing acts of the brave women who serve this General Assembly today and who have followed in Thelma Stovall's luminous footsteps; and

WHEREAS, this progress is also necessary and vital for a free and just society. It is paramount that women's accomplishments be celebrated alongside men's, and that women's voices be heard, because that is the only way toward a culture that is truly equal and that fulfills the promise set forward by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Rights Amendment that Thelma Stovall so bravely defended; and

WHEREAS, this body honors those women in Kentucky and around the country who have reached for their highest aspirations, those mothers and businesswomen and educators and philosophers, those attorneys and athletes and artists and thinkers, the women who are at the firmament of this Commonwealth and who not only provide the lifeblood of our families and our lives, but are at the forefront of so many new and exciting initiatives that are shaping Kentucky's future; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives celebrates the life and legacy of Thelma Stovall on this day during Women's History Month, honors all those women who continue to make Kentucky a place of freedom and equality, and encourages all Kentuckians to embrace equality for both men and women as we join together to build a better and more true Commonwealth for all people;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The members of the House of Representatives celebrate the life and legacy of Thelma Stovall, who served as a valuable member of this august chamber, and posthumously honor her for all she did to carry forward the legacy of women in this Commonwealth and to lay the groundwork for equal rights for all of Kentucky's sons and daughters.

➔Section 2. The members of the House of Representatives recognize Women's History Month, and appropriately recognize its place in Kentuckian's lives.

➔Section 3. The House of Representatives also encourages Kentuckians, men and

women alike, to think about what equality means in our lives and its proper place in the betterment of a just, fair, and equal society.

→Section 4. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Representative Joni L. Jenkins.