

SR-72, As Adopted by Senate, July 13, 2011

Senators Jansen and Hildenbrand offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 72.

A resolution memorializing the life of Betty Ford, former First Lady.

Whereas, We measure America's first ladies, in part, by how they mold and shape the circumstances they inherit. Betty Ford became known to the American public when her husband Gerald Ford took the oath of office on August 9, 1974; and

Whereas, With the exception of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt, no president has inherited a situation as difficult as that which faced President Ford. The United States was mired in an unpopular war halfway around the world that had divided the country and had produced much anger, resentment, and mistrust. For the first and only time, a president had resigned his office in disgrace in the wake of the worst political scandal in our history; and

Whereas, Unlike Lincoln and Roosevelt, who had a full four months to prepare between their elections and inaugurations, Mr. Ford was notified by President Nixon that he was resigning with only one day's notice. Gerald Ford had never aspired to the presidency, nor sought national office. He had spent a quarter of a century as a member of Congress, serving longer on Capitol Hill than any other American president; and

Whereas, Born April 8, 1918, in Chicago and raised in a working class family in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mrs. Ford's formative years proved valuable in helping her take on the challenges America asked of her. Thrust into the position of First Lady, Betty Ford exhibited several defining qualities that helped her husband heal a nation and made her one of the most successful and accomplished first ladies in our nations history; and

Whereas, During her tenure as First Lady, Betty Ford tackled many public issues that were important to her. She was an outspoken advocate of women's rights and encouraged the appointment of more women to senior government posts. She supported the U.N. International Women's Year in 1975, and supported passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; and

Whereas, She promoted programs for handicapped children and brought public attention to the importance of the performing arts. While in the White House, Mrs. Ford encouraged her husband's decision to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to her mentor, Martha Graham, the first dancer so honored; and

Whereas, In 1978 after leaving the White House, her prescription drug and alcohol use led to a family intervention and her self-admittance to Long Beach Naval Hospital for treatment. In facing her personal problems, Betty Ford again dealt openly and honestly with the public. Her 1978 autobiography, *The Times of My Life*, chronicled her life through the White House years and concluded with a candid, unplanned chapter on her admittance to Long Beach. Her second book, *Betty: A Glad Awakening*, published in 1987, recounted her experience of recovery from chemical dependency. She became an active and outspoken champion of improved awareness, education, and treatment for alcohol and other drug dependencies; and

Whereas, In 1982, Betty Ford founded the non-profit Betty Ford Center at the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, California. Mrs. Ford worked tirelessly to raise funds and to help research and design treatments to assist men, women, and families in recovery from alcoholism and other drug dependency. Today The Betty Ford Center is regarded as one of the most outstanding treatment facilities in the world; and

Whereas, Mrs. Ford has been the recipient of many honors and awards. In 1991 President George H. W. Bush presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for providing "selfless, strong, and refreshing leadership on a number of issues." In 1999 President and Mrs. Ford were

awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for "dedicated public service and outstanding humanitarian"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, that we offer this expression of highest tribute to honor the memory of Betty Ford, former First Lady; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Ford family as evidence of our highest esteem.