

HCR 26 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Melissa Leoni, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

In memoriam: Willie Bell Richardson, 1948-2023.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Willie Bell Richardson was born in Camden, South Carolina, on December 20, 1948, to Willie Peay and Minnie Bell Wright Peay Long. She was educated in the Kershaw County Public School System in South Carolina and graduated from Jackson High School in 1967. Willie Bell Richardson's involvement in community activism began in the 1970s in her home state of South Carolina, where she was a member of the Family Planning Advisory Council.

Willie Bell Richardson moved to Salem, Oregon, in 1978, where she continued honing her natural talents as a community activist by serving on a variety of local committees, including the YWCA, the Salem Human Rights Commission, the Oregon Women's Political Caucus, and the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs. She was committed to the education of Black and minority students, becoming the first Black person to be elected to the governing board of the Salem-Keizer School Board, on which she served from 1987 to 1991.

After her term on the school board ended, Willie Bell Richardson continued recruiting and supporting Black teachers and administrators and advising school superintendents and staff to ensure Black and minority voices were heard. Over the years, Willie Bell Richardson served countless Black students as a mentor, consultant, advocate, and encourager and created many opportunities for Black teachers, administrators, and staff to meet and come together for cultural support in Salem.

Willie Bell Richardson served as president of the Oregon Black Pioneers for more than 20 years, deftly shepherding the group as it grew into the leading historical organization for the research and preservation of Black history in Oregon.

Willie Bell Richardson passed away on January 25, 2023. Her impact as a friend, a matriarch, an advocate for the preservation of Black history in Oregon, a champion for Black and minority education, and a respected voice for racial equality will be felt by generations of Oregonians to come.

House Concurrent Resolution 26 honors and celebrates the life and accomplishments of Willie Bell Richardson and expresses gratitude for her service to the people of Oregon.