

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 159

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 11, 2024

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHAVONDA E. SUMTER

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblyman ANTHONY S. VERRELLI

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen Speight, Reynolds-Jackson and Hall

SYNOPSIS

Designates November 14 of each year as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 4/4/2024)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating November 14 of each year as
2 Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, On November 14, 1960, six-year old Ruby Bridges walked
5 to school and integrated the first elementary school in the South;
6 and
7 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges was born on September 8, 1954 to parents
8 Lucille and Abon Bridges and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana;
9 and
10 **WHEREAS**, In 1954, the United States Supreme Court issued the
11 landmark ruling in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,
12 Kansas, ending racial segregation in public schools; and
13 **WHEREAS**, Numerous southern states, including Louisiana, failed to
14 integrate their public schools following the United States Supreme
15 Court’s ruling; and
16 **WHEREAS**, In 1960, a federal court ordered Louisiana to desegregate
17 their public schools beginning on November 14 of that year; and
18 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges passed the entrance exam for the then all-
19 white public William Frantz Elementary School; and
20 **WHEREAS**, On November 14, 1960, Ruby Bridges and her mother
21 were escorted by federal marshals to the William Frantz Elementary
22 School where Ruby faced violent protesters; and
23 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges experienced blatant racism from protesters
24 and parents every day throughout her first year of attendance at
25 William Frantz Elementary; and
26 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges had to be taught in a classroom by herself as
27 all other students were pulled out at the request of their parents; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges had to remain separate from the other
29 children and was not allowed to go to the cafeteria or outside for
30 recess; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Despite these hardships, Ruby Bridges never missed a day
32 of school and by the end of her first year, the school decided to
33 admit more African American children the following year; and
34 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges’ act of bravery inspired America and paved
35 the way for other African American children across the country;
36 and
37 **WHEREAS**, Famous painter Norman Rockwell depicted Ruby Bridges
38 walking to school in his painting “The Problem We All Live With”
39 which has endured as one of Rockwell’s most renowned pieces; and
40 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges became a lifelong activist for racial equality
41 by establishing The Ruby Bridges Foundation in 1999, which uses
42 educational initiatives to promote tolerance and unity among
43 schoolchildren; and
44 **WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges has gained numerous accolades for her life’s
45 work, including the Carter G. Woodson Book Award and the
46 honorary title of deputy federal marshal; and

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
7 *State of New Jersey:*

17 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Ruby Bridges became a lifelong activist for racial equality by establishing The Ruby Bridges Foundation in 1999, which uses educational initiatives to promote tolerance and unity among schoolchildren. Ruby Bridges has also gained numerous accolades for her life's work, including the Carter G. Woodson Book Award

1 and the honorary title of deputy federal marshal. By setting aside
2 November 14 of each year as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day,
3 we can celebrate the courage of young Ruby Bridges and the impact
4 her actions had on African American children across America.