# 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)

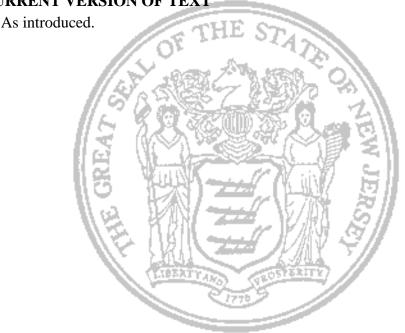
#### Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen Speight, Reynolds-Jackson and Hall

### **SYNOPSIS**

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





(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

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1	WHEREAS, It is fitting for the State of New Jersey to designate
2	November 14 as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day to celebrate the
3	courage of young Ruby Bridges and the impact her actions had on
4	African American children across America; now, therefore,
5	
5	BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and General Assembly of the
7	State of New Jersey:

1. November 14 of each year is designated as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.

2. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue an annual proclamation calling upon public officials, citizens of the State, and other interested groups to observe Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day with appropriate programs and activities.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

#### **STATEMENT**

This joint resolution designates November 14 of each year as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day in the State of New Jersey.

Ruby Bridges was born on September 8, 1954 and was raised in New Orleans, Louisiana by parents Lucille and Abon Bridges. In the same year, the United States Supreme Court issued the landmark ruling in <u>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, ending racial segregation in public schools. However, states across the South, including Louisiana, failed to integrate their public schools. This led to a federal court order for Louisiana to desegregate their public schools beginning on November 14, 1960.</u>

On November 14, 1960, Ruby Bridges and her mother were escorted by federal marshals to the William Frantz Elementary School where Ruby faced violent protesters. The violence of the protestors, blatant racism from parents, and forced isolation plagued Ruby Bridges' first year of attendance at William Frantz Elementary.

Despite these hardships, Ruby Bridges never missed a day of school and by the end of her first year, the school decided to admit more African American children the following year. Ruby Bridges' act of bravery inspired America and led to a commemorative piece by famous artist Norman Rockwell titled "The Problem We Must All Live With."

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

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- 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,
- we can celebrate the courage of young Ruby Bridges and the impact
- 4 her actions had on African American children across America.