

Legislation Text

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Honoring the life and legacy of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg for her instrumental legal career, service to the United States of America, and her relentless work to challenge gender discrimination and ensure equal protections for all Americans.

WHEREAS, The Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg was born in Brooklyn, New York on March 15, 1933 and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University, attended Harvard Law School, and went on to receive her law degree from Columbia Law School; and

WHEREAS, On June 23, 1954, Justice Ginsburg married Martin (“Marty”) Ginsburg who she met on a blind date while attending Cornell University. Justice Ginsburg and her husband had two children together, including Jane Carol Ginsburg and James Steven Ginsburg. Marty and Ruth's marriage was to be admired as they supported one another through many trials including serious illnesses. Marty advocated tirelessly for Justice Ginsburg to be nominated to the Supreme Court and remained her strongest champion through the end of his life; and

WHEREAS, After serving as a law clerk to the Honorable Edmund L. Palmieri, Judge of the United States District Court from 1959 to 1961, Justice Ginsburg worked as a research associate and associate director of the Columbia Law School’s Project on International Procedure, a Professor of Law at Rutgers University, and served as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg served as an essential leader for the Women’s Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (“ACLU”), and served as the General Counsel from 1973 to 1980 and as a National Board of Director from 1974 to 1980; and

WHEREAS, While working with the ACLU, Justice Ginsburg persistently argued for an end to the use of differential treatment based on gender and her efforts led to structural changes that reduced gender discrimination for Americans everywhere; and

WHEREAS, In 1980, United States President James “Jimmy” Carter appointed her as Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit; and

WHEREAS, On June 14, 1993, Ruther Bader Ginsburg accepted the nomination of United States President William “Bill” Clinton for the United States Supreme Court, and the United States Senate confirmed her nomination by a vote of ninety-six to three. On August 10, 1993 Ruth Bader Ginsburg was sworn in as the first Jewish female and second female justice to serve in the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, In 1996 the United States filed a suit against the Virginia Military Institute (“VMI”), arguing that the gender-exclusive admissions policy violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. In a landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court stipulating women could no longer be excluded from the state-funded school based on their gender, Justice Ginsburg wrote the majority opinion stating, “generalizations about ‘the way women are,’ estimates of what is appropriate for *most women*, no

longer justify denying opportunity to women whose talent and capacity place them outside the average description” ; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg was revered nationally for her belief in equal rights for all Americans and her dissenting opinions in cases related to civil rights, equal pay, contraceptives, and voting rights helped lift her to that of a cultural icon in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg once said that, “...the greatest dissents do become court opinions and gradually over time their views become the dominant view. So that’s the dissenter’s hope: that they are writing not for today, but for tomorrow” ; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg was known for valuing friendships in her life, often speaking publicly about her long-standing friendship with fellow Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who held a fundamentally different interpretation of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, On September 18, 2020, Justice Ginsburg died at the age of eighty-seven having served on the United States Supreme Court for over twenty-seven years; and

WHEREAS, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg will be remembered for her courageous leadership, eternal wisdom, and uncompromising belief in the United States Constitution and Supreme Court; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors the life of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her legacy of service to the American people.