



Legislation Text

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Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the landmark United States Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*.

WHEREAS, On May 17th, 1954, the United States Supreme Court unanimously decided that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal and established segregation of public school children by race as unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was initiated by the family of Linda Brown, an eight year old African American girl who was denied admission into an elementary school only blocks from her home and sent to a school for non-white children; and

WHEREAS, Linda Brown's parents filed suit to challenge the Board of Education's policy of segregation and to gain admission for their daughter into the nearby school for white children; and

WHEREAS, The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, where the Court, in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, considered an issue raised in several cases from different states in which black children were denied admission into public schools attended by white children - whether race-based segregation in public education denies children equal access to education even if the physical facilities are equal; and

WHEREAS, Brown's legal team, led by then NAACP litigator Thurgood Marshall argued that race-based segregation and the concept of "separate but equal" resulted in unequal educational opportunities for African American students; and

WHEREAS, The Topeka Board of Education argued that the separate schools were equal, therefore the Board's denial of black students conformed with the "separate but equal" doctrine established by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*; and

WHEREAS, In a unanimous decision authored by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Supreme Court held that segregation in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States because separate schools are inherently unequal and segregation denies African American children equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, *Brown v. Board of Education*'s reversal of the *Plessy* doctrine of "separate but equal" stands as a landmark victory for the Civil Rights Movement and began the process of desegregation in public schools across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Although formal segregation is unconstitutional, much more work needs to be done to address the informal segregation that persists in America's public schools six decades after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision; now, therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby commemorate the

60th Anniversary of the landmark United States Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*.