

A RESOLUTION honoring Mary Carson Breckenridge during Women's History Month.

WHEREAS, Mary Carson Breckenridge was born on February 17, 1881, in Memphis, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, to overcome a divorce and the deaths of two of her children, Mary Carson Breckenridge became a nurse and joined the American Committee for Devastated France. In Europe she discovered that her training could be used in rural America, particularly to care for new mothers and infants, and these philosophies and skills would be the foundation of the Frontier Nursing Service, which Mrs. Breckenridge founded in 1925 in Leslie County, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, the Frontier Nursing Service would stand as one of this nation's most innovative and necessary healthcare services, and would establish as its mission both the training of nurse-midwives and the service of rural, forgotten communities. In 1939, due to increased demand upon the outbreak of World War II, Mary Carson Breckenridge founded the Frontier Graduate School of Midwifery, and the school continues to operate today as a testament to the courageous, necessary vision it was founded upon; and

WHEREAS, Mary Carson Breckenridge had a log cabin, called the Big House, built in Wendover, Kentucky, and the Bed and Breakfast Inn at Wendover stands as a monument to Mrs. Breckenridge's legacy. There are also six rural healthcare clinics in eastern Kentucky that operate under the Frontier Nursing Service's mission, as well as the Mary Breckenridge Hospital, the Mary Breckenridge Home Health Agency, and the Frontier School of Midwifery and Family Nursing; and

WHEREAS, this august body today rightfully honors Mary Carson Breckenridge for what she accomplished for the people of this Commonwealth, for the legacy of compassion and care she left behind, and for how she radically changed how health services were administered to women and babies during the middle of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, in so doing this body also recognizes Women's History Month and acknowledges that women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historic contributions in every area to the growth and strength of our nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways; and

WHEREAS, as recently as 1970, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in our nation's schools or in the general public consciousness. To raise awareness, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County, California, Commission on the Status of Women initiated a Women's History Week celebration in 1978. After its activities in March of that year were met with enthusiastic response, the education process continued. A member of the group was invited to Sarah Lawrence College in 1979 to participate in Women's History Institutes, attended by the national leaders of organizations for women and girls. Attendees began similar celebrations within their own organizations and school districts and secured a Congressional Resolution declaring a National Women's History Week. In 1981, Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah and Representative Barbara Mikulski of Maryland co-sponsored the first Joint Congressional Resolution recognizing National Women's History Week; and

WHEREAS, as word spread across the nation, state departments of education encouraged celebrations of National Women's History Week as an effective means to achieve equity goals within classrooms. Essay contests, special programs, and other community observances focused on the significance of women in history. Within just a few years, thousands of schools and communities were celebrating National Women's History Week, supported and encouraged by resolutions from governors, city councils, school boards, and the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Since that time, the National Women's History Month Resolution has been approved with bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress, and the President has issued for our nation a special

Women's History Month Proclamation each year; and

WHEREAS, American women have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of the life of the nation by constituting a significant portion of the labor force, working inside and outside of the home; and

WHEREAS, American women have played a unique role throughout the history of the nation by providing the majority of the volunteer labor force and improving the productivity of the workplace. American women were the driving force behind the establishment of early charitable, philanthropic and cultural institutions, and yet it was their work ethic that helped tilt the momentum of World War II in favor of our nation; and

WHEREAS, American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have served as early leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement. Women have been leaders, not only in securing their own rights of suffrage and equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement, and other movements, especially the peace movement, which have served to create a more fair and just society for all; and

WHEREAS, despite the countless contributions women have made in the United States and efforts to recognize their importance in history, the role of American women has been overlooked. This honorable body lauds the efforts to raise awareness of women in history, not only during this month, but throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, this body hereby honors those women who serve this Commonwealth, from the female members of this General Assembly to the teachers and doctors and lawyers and thinkers who strive to bring attention to the need for equality in pay and in status between men and women; and

WHEREAS, this body also duly honors Mary Carson Breckenridge, who left such an indelible imprint not only on women's history but on American history as well, and

urges all Kentuckians to observe Women's History Month and to consider their own place in the ongoing struggle for equality;

NOW, THEREFORE,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

➔Section 1. The members of the House of Representatives honor Mary Carson Breckenridge, a true titan of women's history, and acknowledge her place both in the context of women's history and the history of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

➔Section 2. In recognition of the countless contributions women have made in all areas of life throughout history, the House of Representatives joins the United States Congress in expressing gratitude to the women of our nation.

➔Section 3. The House of Representatives, in accordance with President Barack Obama's 2016 Proclamation, recognizes March as Women's History Month and encourages participation in all events and observances and programs that commemorate women and their many accomplishments.

➔Section 4. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Representative Mary Lou Marzian.