

1 A RESOLUTION adjourning the Senate in honor and loving memory of Benjamin
2 "Ben" Richmond.

3 WHEREAS, Benjamin "Ben" Richmond was born and raised in Jackson,
4 Mississippi, as the son of a Methodist minister. Ben's life began the way it ended, in the
5 middle of a fight for civil rights; and

6 WHEREAS, Ben's passion for music was shaped in his father's church and led him
7 to pursue a degree in music from Tougaloo College, a historically Black college in
8 Jackson, after which he toured Europe as a concert and opera singer for seven years; and

9 WHEREAS, Ben returned from Europe in 1979 to Madison, Wisconsin, where he
10 earned a Master's degree in Music from the University of Wisconsin. After graduation, he
11 began work with the Madison, Wisconsin Urban League and eventually became the
12 President of Battle Creek, Michigan's Urban League Office. In 1987, Ben arrived in
13 Louisville to follow Arthur Walters as Louisville's Urban League leader; and

14 WHEREAS, Ben sought to alter the strategy of Louisville's Urban League by, in his
15 own words, "getting into the boardrooms, and places of influence, and talking about
16 solutions," Ben opened the Urban League's current offices at 1535 West Broadway in
17 1990, a space that is 19,000 square feet and was a \$1.6 million investment project for the
18 Urban League and community; and

19 WHEREAS, Ben's tenure in Louisville, which spanned from 1987 through 2015,
20 saw the creation of the Louisville Career Expo, a new programmatic direction which
21 doubled the Urban League's reach and impact in Louisville, securing community
22 partnerships in economic development, education, and civic affairs that survived beyond
23 his three decades of leadership. Additionally, under Ben's leadership, the Urban League's
24 revenue increased from \$670,000 per fiscal year to more than \$3.5 million, funding
25 college scholarships and community investments; and

26 WHEREAS, in 1993, Ben created the non-profit Rebuilding Our Urban
27 Neighborhood Dwellings (REBOUND), Inc. to increase community development and

1 neighborhood revitalization through partnerships with the Louisville Urban League, the
2 City of Louisville, and Main Street Realty. Ben's commitment to affordable housing and
3 pathways to home ownership for black families has led to REBOUND completing 300
4 affordable housing units to date, far exceeding the initial goal in 1993 of 90 units. In
5 honor of this everlasting success, REBOUND plans to build a new multi-family housing
6 complex and name it in Ben's honor; and

7 WHEREAS, in 2007, Ben was presented with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
8 Freedom Award, given annually by Louisville Metro to persons dedicated to the
9 principles of peace, equality, and justice; and

10 WHEREAS, upon Ben's retirement, members of the Louisville Urban League
11 Board of Directors gifted funds to the Urban League to establish an endowment in honor
12 of Ben's tenure, and per Ben's wishes the funds will be used to award the Benjamin K.
13 Richmond Scholarship for Undergraduate Studies in Business, which is an academic
14 scholarship of at least \$10,000 to be awarded to a deserving Black public school
15 graduating senior in Louisville who has been accepted into a four-year degree program.
16 The funds will also be used for the Benjamin K. Richmond Small Business Development
17 Grants, which are awards of no less than \$5,000 to be used to support Black-owned
18 businesses and Black entrepreneurs participating in Black business programs and training
19 affiliated with the Urban League; and

20 WHEREAS, Ben's work with the Urban League helped sew him into the fabric of
21 the community where he was a member of the Broadway Temple AME Zion Church and
22 choir, a member of the Rotary Club of Louisville, and a member of the Omega Psi Phi
23 Fraternity; and

24 WHEREAS, Ben is survived by his sister, Ella Docena Holland (Dr. William
25 Holland); brother, Raymond Richmond, Jr. (Autry Richmond); loving friend and partner,
26 Marie Porter; nephew, Mansa Holland; nieces, Sia Holland, Afryea Holland and Andrea
27 Richmond; and great-nephews, Nicholas Israelson and Cameron Allison; and

1 WHEREAS, Benjamin "Ben" Richmond, who left this earthly life on January 16th,
2 2024, will be missed and his contribution, and leadership to the Louisville community
3 will continue to be felt in perpetuity;

4 NOW, THEREFORE,

5 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*
6 *Kentucky:*

7 ➔Section 1. The Senate does hereby express its profound condolences and
8 sympathy upon the passing of Benjamin "Ben" Richmond.

9 ➔Section 2. When the Senate adjourns this day, it does so in honor and loving
10 memory of Benjamin "Ben" Richmond.

11 ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
12 Resolution to Senator Gerald Neal for delivery to the family.