

SENATE RESOLUTION

8647

By Senators Saldaña, Liiias, Hasegawa, Keiser, Lovick, Nobles, Pedersen, Robinson, Stanford, Wellman, and C. Wilson

1 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis Little-Epamynondas has demonstrated a
2 sustained commitment over more than 30 years of service toward the
3 realization of health care as a human right for all, including the
4 Black, Latino, and LGBTQAI communities; and

5 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis started at POCAAN (People of Color Against
6 AIDS Network) as a program manager in 1990 and assumed the role of
7 executive director in 1998 and worked closely with the Washington
8 State Department of Health and the Washington State Department of
9 Corrections to start one of the first HIV medical case management
10 programs focused on the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of
11 Color) community, which worked to reduce the effects of HIV in
12 communities of color, until her retirement in 2015; and

13 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis' tenure as executive director at POCAAN was
14 energetically focused on building community responses to the HIV
15 epidemic, and her love for training others increased and expanded the
16 BIPOC provider's response to HIV, ensuring access to a full range of
17 opportunities that have significantly impacted the fight for an HIV
18 free Washington State; and

19 WHEREAS, Under Mrs. Phyllis' leadership POCAAN's community
20 outreach and engagement expanded programs like Brother-to-Brother,
21 Sistah-to-Sistah, and Entre Hermanos, all of which have become
22 501(c) (3) organizations working to improve all the lives of
23 Washington State citizens; and

1 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis cared deeply for the Transgender
2 Community in a time when the community had few allies; she hired
3 a Black Trans Woman, Mrs. Vanessa Grandberry, and helped to form
4 T-Time, a Black Trans program that distributed one of the
5 nation's first newsletters focused on the Black Trans Community;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis created and sustained programs during
8 her tenure that supported BIPOC communities across the state,
9 which led to the opening of three new offices in Spokane,
10 Olympia, and Bremerton; and

11 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis helped expand POCAAN's reach in Tacoma
12 and Yakima, and grew the staff serving these communities to more
13 than 50, many of whom still work in the community toward the
14 eradication of HIV today; and

15 WHEREAS, Mrs. Phyllis redefined what care services look like
16 in Washington State as an advocate for whole-person care, and
17 expanded POCAAN's HIV services with the understanding that
18 related issues such as substance abuse, incarceration,
19 homelessness, sexually transmitted diseases, racism, sexism, and
20 homophobia also contribute to community marginalization and
21 health disparities;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State
23 Senate does hereby honor the lifelong commitment of this leader,
24 advocate, trailblazer, and ambassador in the work of HIV
25 Outreach and Education to BIPOC Communities across our state and
26 to further recognize that her passing on November 24, 2021,
27 leaves a deep void in the work to end HIV and other health
28 inequities in Washington State; and

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Senate express profound
30 appreciation and enduring gratitude to Mrs. Phyllis, honor her
31 rich legacy for health equity in communities of color, and
32 recognize her influence on improving the lives of those affected
33 by HIV here in Washington; and

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
35 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the
36 surviving family members of Mrs. Phyllis and to Steven Sawyer,
37 executive director of POCAAN.

1 I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate,
2 do hereby certify that this is a true and
3 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8647,
4 adopted by the Senate
5 February 16, 2022

6 SARAH BANNISTER
7 Secretary of the Senate