

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

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**HOUSE RESOLUTION 608*
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/17/12**

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 5, 2011

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF BERTHA "B"
2 MERRILL HOLT.

3 Whereas, Bertha "B" Merrill Holt was born on August 16, 1916, in Eufaula,
4 Alabama, to William H. Merrill and Bertha H. Moore Merrill; and

5 Whereas, B Holt earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and history in 1938 from
6 Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia; and

7 Whereas, B Holt attended law school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel
8 Hill from 1939 to 1940 and then transferred to the University of Alabama, where she received a
9 law degree in 1941; and

10 Whereas, B Holt furthered her education by taking graduate courses at George
11 Washington University; and

12 Whereas, during B Holt's early career, she worked as an attorney for the U.S.
13 Treasury and the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C.; and

14 Whereas, B Holt met her future husband, W. Clary Holt, while working in
15 Washington, D.C., and the two were married on March 14, 1942; and

16 Whereas, B Holt and her family moved to Burlington, North Carolina, in 1946,
17 where she quickly became involved in her community; and

18 Whereas, B Holt became active in the local Democratic Party and, in 1975, was
19 appointed to the North Carolina House of Representatives, becoming the first woman to
20 represent the district; and

21 Whereas, B Holt served with honor and distinction in the House of Representatives
22 for consecutive terms between 1975 and 1994; and

23 Whereas, B Holt provided exceptional service to her constituency and the General
24 Assembly, serving as Cochair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety
25 and as Vice-Chair of the Education Subcommittee on Preschool, Elementary, and Secondary
26 Education, Judiciary I, and as a member of several other committees, including Constitutional
27 Amendments and Referenda and Environment; and

28 Whereas, B Holt was appointed to a number of legislative study committees,
29 including the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, Pest Control Study
30 Committee, Computer Literacy Study Committee, Joint Commission on School Salary
31 Schedules, Open Meetings Study Committee, and Inmate Substance Abuse Study Committee;
32 and

33 Whereas, during her tenure in the General Assembly, B Holt led the successful
34 effort to make marital rape a crime and fought for the State Abortion Fund because she
35 believed a woman's right to self-determination should not be limited by her economic status;
36 and

37 Whereas, B Holt was a founding member of the Alamance Women's Political
38 Caucus and the Women's Resource Center in Alamance County and was a lifetime member of



1 the Democratic Women of Alamance County and the Senior Democrats of Alamance County;
2 and

3 Whereas, in 1995 B Holt served as a member of the delegation to the Fourth United
4 Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, China; and

5 Whereas, B Holt was a member of various organizations, including the North
6 Carolina Bar Association, Pi Beta Phi, North Carolina Historical Society, Century Book Club,
7 Down to Earth Garden Club, American Association of University Women, Task Force
8 Community Based Alternative for State Offenders, and North Carolina Women's Forum; and

9 Whereas, B Holt served on a number of boards and commissions, including the Girl
10 Scout Board, North Carolina School of Public Health Advisory Board, State Conference of
11 Social Work, LIFE-Guardianship Council, ARC/NC, Advisory Board of the Alamance County
12 Salvation Army, Advisory Board of the School Health Board, Board of Directors of the Snow
13 Camp Historical Society, and Vice-Chair of the North Carolina State University Committee on
14 Transportation; and

15 Whereas, as a great proponent of education, especially Civics and History, B Holt
16 often talked to high school classes and adult groups about our State's laws and government; and

17 Whereas, B Holt received numerous honors and recognitions for her good deeds,
18 including the Outstanding Alumna Award from Agnes Scott College in 1978, Legislative
19 Award from the Nurses Association in 1979, Hospice of North Carolina Award in 1984,
20 Legislative Award from the North Carolina Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation
21 and Dance in 1984, Distinguished Service in Promoting School Health Education from the
22 North Carolina Society for Public Health Education in 1986, Faith Active to Public Life Award
23 by the North Carolina Council of Churches in 1987, and Distinguished Women's Award in
24 Government from the North Carolina Council on the Status of Women in 1991; and

25 Whereas, B Holt was listed in Who's Who of American Women and Who's Who in
26 America and received an honorary Doctor of Laws from Agnes Scott College in 2007; and

27 Whereas, B Holt was active in the Episcopal Church, serving as a member of the
28 Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter in Burlington, President of the Episcopal Church
29 Women of the Church of the Holy Comforter, High School Sunday school teacher, a member
30 of the Diocesan Council of North Carolina Episcopal Diocese, Alternate Delegate to the
31 Episcopal General Convention, Episcopal Diocesan Convention Delegate, and Episcopal
32 Diocesan Convention President for the Burlington Council of Church Women; and

33 Whereas, B Holt held the distinction of becoming the first woman to serve on the
34 Bishop's Standing Committee and the Church Vestry and was the first woman to serve as the
35 Senior Warden of the Vestry of the Church of Holy Comforter; and

36 Whereas, B Holt died on June 19, 2010, at the age of 93; and

37 Whereas, B Holt is survived by a daughter, Harriet H. Whitley; sons, W. Merrill
38 Holt and W. Jefferson Holt; grandchildren, Allyson Burroughs, Anna Blessington, Alexander
39 Holt, William Holt, Croft Holt, and Christopher Holt; and great-grandchildren, Grace
40 Burroughs, Lawson Burroughs, and Jack Blessington; Now, therefore,
41 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

42 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives honors the memory of Bertha "B"
43 Merrill Holt and expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for the service she
44 rendered her community, State, and nation.

45 **SECTION 2.** The House of Representatives extends its sympathy to the family of
46 Bertha "B" Merrill Holt for the loss of a beloved family member.

47 **SECTION 3.** The Principal Clerk shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution
48 to the family of Bertha "B" Merrill Holt.

49 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.