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HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO REMEMBER AND COMMEMORATE UNITED STATES SENATOR
HATTIE OPHELIA WYATT CARAWAY FOR HER MANY NOTABLE
CONTRIBUTIONS TO WOMEN'S HISTORY.

Subtitle

TO REMEMBER AND COMMEMORATE UNITED STATES
SENATOR HATTIE OPHELIA WYATT CARAWAY FOR
HER MANY NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO WOMEN'S
HISTORY.

WHEREAS, March 1 is the first day of Women's History Month which is annually declared and nationally celebrated to highlight the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society; and

WHEREAS, Women's History Month is also celebrated during March in the United Kingdom and Australia; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas holds a significant role in the history and the accomplishment of women by being home to the first woman ever elected to the United States Senate, Mrs. Hattie Ophelia Wyatt Caraway (D-AR), in 1932; and

WHEREAS, Hattie Caraway was appointed to the United States Senate in 1931 to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, United States Senator Thaddeus Caraway; and

WHEREAS, party leaders assumed the widow had no intention of running



for a full term, but they clearly underestimated Hattie Caraway; and

WHEREAS, when on May 9, 1932, Hattie Caraway surprised everyone and declared her candidacy for reelection, she noted in her diary, "I pitched a coin and heads came [up] three times", and she added, "I really want to try out my own theory of a woman running for office"; and

WHEREAS, Hattie Caraway's male competitors joked that she would be lucky to attract 1 percent (1%) of the vote, but the tenacious "little lady from Arkansas" enlisted the persuasive skills of her friend, Louisiana United States Senator Huey Long; and

WHEREAS, the highlight of her 1932 campaign came in August, when the controversial Senator Huey Long joined Hattie Caraway for a week-long road trip nicknamed the "Hattie and Huey Tour"; and

WHEREAS, when the Hattie and Huey Tour went storming through Arkansas with his big sound trucks, Long bellowed: "We're here to pull a lot of pot-bellied politicians off a little woman's neck"; and

WHEREAS, giving her own stump speeches alongside the "Louisiana Kingfish", Hattie Caraway won the election with double the vote of her nearest rival and continued serving in the United States Senate until 1945; and

WHEREAS, Hattie Caraway was known for her silent strength, gaining the nickname "Silent Hattie" and reserving her opinions for smaller committee meetings and quiet room discussions instead of the United States Senate floor; and

WHEREAS, Hattie Caraway became an effective legislator and continued to break many gender barriers in the United States Senate, including becoming the first woman to chair a United States Senate committee in 1933; and

WHEREAS, on October 19, 1943, in the absence of the Vice-President and the President Pro Tempore, the gavel was handed to Senator Hattie Caraway of

Arkansas, making her the first woman to formally preside over the United States Senate, and that day in October 1943 remains a milestone in United States Senate history; and

WHEREAS, when asked about her experience presiding over the United States Senate, Hattie Caraway told reporters, “Nothing to it”, and added that after all, the Senate is the “best behaved crowd of men you ever saw”; and

WHEREAS, as her career drew to a close, journalist Drew Pearson commented: “In that turbulent . . . [Senate] chamber, where a person’s good points or bad quickly shine through the gloss, [Hattie Caraway] held her own”.; and

WHEREAS, on her final day in office, the United States Senate tendered Hattie Caraway the high honor of a standing ovation; and

WHEREAS, we, as the elected women of the General Assembly, recognizing our fellow Arkansan’s courage, strength, and resolve to break all norms of the 1930’s society and political standards, proudly honor United States Senator Hattie Ophelia Wyatt Caraway on this first day of March at the commencement of Women’s History Month as Senator Caraway serves as an inspiration to each of us and to our state for her incredible achievements and place in American history,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives remember and commemorate United States Senator Hattie Ophelia Wyatt Caraway for her many notable contributions to women’s history.