

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 42

Honoring Mary Eliza Mahoney, America's first professionally trained Black nurse.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 11, 2023

Ms. BUSH (for herself, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. McCLELLAN, Ms. BROWN, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, and Mr. SOTO) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Honoring Mary Eliza Mahoney, America's first professionally trained Black nurse.

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney was born May 7, 1845, in Dorchester, Massachusetts, to Charles Mahoney and Mary Jane Seward Mahoney-freed, formerly enslaved persons who had moved to Boston from North Carolina;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney, at the age of 33, was accepted as a student nurse at the hospital-based program of nursing at the New England Hospital for Women and Children;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney was 1 of 4 students, of a class of 42, who completed nursing at the New England Hospital for Women and Children in 1879;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney devoted her time and efforts unselfishly to the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and was installed as the Official Chaplin;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney's motto was, "Work more and better the coming year than the previous year.";

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney delivered the first annual keynote speech of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and established the Mary Eliza Award, which today continues as the Mary Eliza Mahoney Award bestowed biennially by the American Nurses Association;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney supported the suffrage movement and was the first Black professionally trained nurse to receive retirement benefits from a fund left by a Boston physician to care for 60 nurses, who received 25 dollars every 3 months as long as they lived;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney served as the director of the Howard Orphanage Asylum for Black children in Kings Park, Long Island, in New York City from 1911 until 1912;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney died on January 4, 1926, at the age of 80, after 3 years of battling breast cancer;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney's gravesite is in Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett, Massachusetts, and the headstone on her grave states, "The First Professional Negro Nurse in the U.S.A.";

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney was inducted into the American Nurses Association Hall of Fame in 1976;

Whereas Mary Eliza Mahoney advanced the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice and confronting issues affecting professional nurses, such as the shortage of nurses;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic worsened working conditions for nurses, and Forbes estimated in 2022 that 47 percent of health care workers left or are considering leaving the profession;

Whereas, today only 6.3 percent of the registered nurse workforce identify as Black out of the 4,300,000 registered nurses in the country, despite research proving Black nurses are critical for providing Black communities better health care; and

Whereas nursing is a critical investment to the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective patient care, and the Nation should invest in and value nursing care: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) honors Mary Eliza Mahoney, the first Black
4 nurse, for an outstanding nursing career, dedication
5 to the United States nursing profession, and exem-
6 plary contributions to local and national professional
7 nursing organizations;

8 (2) recognizes Mary Eliza Mahoney as the first
9 professionally trained Black nurse, and honors other
10 Black nurses who practice nursing with distinction;

11 (3) honors and supports the goals and activities
12 of National Nurses Week;

13 (4) promotes further understanding and public
14 awareness of the history of American nurses, par-
15 ticularly Black nurses, who practiced nursing with

1 compassion and devotion and transmitted new sci-
2 entific knowledge using science-based nursing prac-
3 tice; and

4 (5) advocates for Black, Latina, and other
5 women of color to enter nursing and supports strate-
6 gies to retain and bring back nurses who are consid-
7 ering leaving or have left the nursing profession.

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