

**No. R-227. House concurrent resolution in memory of Leslie Ann Bingham Williams of Calais.**

(H.C.R.173)

Offered by: Representative Ancel of Calais

Offered by: Senators Cummings, Doyle, and Pollina

Whereas, Leslie Williams was a Chicago native, a graduate of the Bronx High School of Science, earned a bachelor's degree from Antioch College and a master's of fine arts in writing from Vermont College, and

Whereas, her multifaceted career included work as an elementary school educator, Headstart administrator, and college writing instructor, and

Whereas, outside the classroom, Leslie Williams was a social activist who, in her 50s, joined the Peace Corps, serving in Thailand (1986–1988), and

Whereas, despite her lack of prior legal or public policy experience, in 1988, the ACLUVT (American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont) decided that Leslie Williams, a woman brimming with kindness and humor but who was not easily cowed, was the ideal candidate to lead the organization, and

Whereas, her leadership of the ACLUVT (1988–2000) coincided with the Vermont Supreme Court's momentous school financing decision, *Brigham v. State*, 166 Vt. 246, mandating equal educational funding for all Vermont, and

Whereas, Leslie Williams was instrumental in organizing a team of remarkable lawyers who represented the ACLUVT during the legal deliberations leading to the *Brigham* ruling, and

Whereas, she was a consistently passionate defender of Vermonters' civil liberties, through the ACLUVT's participation in all sectors of the public arena, and

Whereas, as ACLUVT Director, Leslie Williams focused the organization's attention on a number of critical topics, including: the rights of Vermonters regardless of sexual orientation; conditions in Vermont's prisons; women's reproductive rights; police abuse; religious freedom; and censorship, and

Whereas, Leslie Williams worked effectively and collegially with the ACLUVT's board, staff, and volunteers, and she was called back in 2003 to her old position for an interim appointment, and

Whereas, in 2004, the ACLUVT honored Leslie Williams with its highest recognition, the David Curtis Civil Liberties Award, and

Whereas, on Wednesday, March 27, 2015, Leslie Williams, an amazing woman, died, leaving her children, George, Sarah, JC, and Matthew; their life partners; 11 grandchildren; and a great-grandchild, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends its condolences to the family of Leslie Ann Bingham Williams of Calais, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each of her children.