

2007 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 44

April 23, 2007 – Introduced by Senator RISSER, cosponsored by Representative BERCEAU. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** the life and public service of Virginia B. Hart.

2 Whereas, Virginia Baily Hart, who for decades served as a champion for women
3 in public service, passed away at the age of 92 on Saturday, March 24, 2007, in
4 Fitchburg, Wisconsin; and

5 Whereas, Virginia Hart became the first woman appointed to a cabinet post in
6 Wisconsin when Governor Patrick Lucey named her secretary of the Department of
7 Regulation and Licensing in 1973; and

8 Whereas, in 1977, Virginia Hart was selected as chair of the state Industry,
9 Labor, and Human Relations Commission, and later as chair of the Labor and
10 Industry Review Commission; and

11 Whereas, Virginia Hart also served on the Judicial Commission, the state
12 Board of Vocational and Adult Education, the state Public Defender Board, and the
13 board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin; and

14 Whereas, this year is the 25th anniversary of the Virginia Hart Special
15 Recognition Award, which was established upon Virginia Hart's retirement from

1 state government in 1983 to honor women in public service who demonstrate
2 exemplary performance that improves the quality of life for Wisconsin citizens; and

3 Whereas, Virginia Hart was a superb advocate for workers' rights from the very
4 start of her career, first as a social worker in Rochester, New York, later working for
5 the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in Tennessee during the 1940s,
6 and then coming to Wisconsin where she taught at the UW-Madison School for
7 Workers while earning a master's degree in labor economics in 1947; and

8 Whereas, in the 1960s, Virginia Hart helped set up the Community Welfare
9 Council, which later became the Community Action Commission of Dane County,
10 and served as its president from 1967–1969; and

11 Whereas, Virginia Hart was appointed to two terms on the Police and Fire
12 Commission where she worked to improve opportunities for women on both the
13 Madison Fire Department and the Madison Police Department; and

14 Whereas, Virginia Hart helped to form the Group Health Cooperative of South
15 Central Wisconsin, was executive secretary of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin,
16 and more recently was involved in the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association
17 in Madison; and

18 Whereas, Virginia Hart was a world traveler, backpacking with her husband
19 of 67 years, Henry Hart, in the Rockies, the Andes, and the Himalayas, and working
20 as a labor education specialist at the University of Hawaii and for the Agency for
21 International Development in New Delhi, India; now, therefore be it

22 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the members of the
23 Wisconsin legislature commend Virginia Hart for her decades of public service, her
24 trailblazing efforts to advance the causes of women and working people, and her

1 grace and spirit; express their deep sorrow at her death; and extend their sincere
2 condolences to her family and friends; and, be it further

3 ***Resolved, That*** the senate chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint
4 resolution to Virginia Hart's husband, Henry Hart; her daughter, Nancy Hart
5 Hernandez, of Houston, Texas; and her son, Benjamin Baily Hart, of Dallas, Texas.

6 (END)