



2025 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

April 14, 2025 - Introduced by Senators SPREITZER, CARPENTER, DRAKE, HESSELBEIN, L. JOHNSON, LARSON, PFAFF, RATCLIFF, ROYS, SMITH, WALL and WIRCH, cosponsored by Representatives ROE, ANDERSON, BROWN, J. JACOBSON, ARNEY, BARE, BILLINGS, CLANCY, DESMIDT, DOYLE, FITZGERALD, JOERS, JOHNSON, KAUFERT, KRUG, MADISON, MOORE OMOKUNDE, NEUBAUER, SINICKI, SNODGRASS, STUBBS, SUBECK, TENORIO and UDELL. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** honoring the life and public service of Senator Timothy Francis
2 Cullen.

3 Whereas, Timothy Francis Cullen was born on February 25, 1944, in
4 Janesville, Wisconsin, and passed away on December 23, 2024; and

5 Whereas, son of a Teamster and a United Auto Workers Union member, Tim
6 was the third generation of his family to work at General Motors in Janesville, and
7 he worked there for four summers in the 1960s to pay his way through college; and

8 Whereas, Tim graduated from Janesville High School in 1962 and from the
9 University of Wisconsin–Whitewater in 1966, and attended graduate school at
10 Northern Illinois University; and

11 Whereas, after graduation from UW–Whitewater, Tim served in the United
12 States Army Reserve and taught social studies at George S. Parker High School
13 before being elected to the Janesville City Council in 1970; and

1 Whereas, Tim served as ombudsman for U.S. Representative Les Aspin from
2 1971 to 1974; and

3 Whereas, while serving as the people's advocate, Tim bridged the gap between
4 constituents of the First Congressional District and the decisions being made on
5 their behalf in Washington, through making government more responsive and
6 accessible, cutting through the red tape of an often distant and unresponsive
7 bureaucracy, lending an ear to their issues and concerns, and giving a voice to the
8 people of Wisconsin's First Congressional District; and

9 Whereas, in 1974, Tim ran for the Wisconsin State Senate as a Democrat,
10 winning his election to represent the 15th State Senate District with more than 55
11 percent of the vote; and

12 Whereas, Tim served from 1975 to 1987 in the Wisconsin State
13 Senate—including as Senate Majority Leader from 1982 to 1986—and chaired
14 committees relating to diverse issues including agriculture, labor, aging,
15 transportation, business, and financial institutions; and

16 Whereas, Tim's first bill enacted into law ceded state lands to the City of
17 Delavan for park and recreational purposes, and it was followed later that session
18 by bills that eliminated a citizenship requirement for bartenders and made Susan
19 B. Anthony's birthday a special observance day in Wisconsin Schools; and

20 Whereas, as Senate Majority leader, Tim was a champion for policies that
21 improved the lives of everyday Wisconsinites, provided support to local
22 municipalities, and protected consumers, workers, and both current and future
23 homeowners; and

24 Whereas, legislation authored by Senator Cullen that was enacted into law

1 during his first six legislative sessions in the State Senate included improvements
2 to state unemployment compensation laws, the creation of the Homeownership
3 Mortgage Loan Program, increased payments to Wisconsinites claiming the
4 homestead tax credit, better consumer protections for credit card holders,
5 prohibiting felons from possessing firearms, and protections against sexual
6 exploitation of children and the abuse of vulnerable adults; and

7 Whereas, Tim's advocacy for the people of the 15th State Senate District and
8 all Wisconsinites was reflected in his legislative advocacy surrounding consumer
9 protection, housing, agriculture, labor, transportation, conservation efforts, and
10 government transparency; and

11 Whereas, a sharp, shrewd leader and coalition builder, Tim's great respect for
12 his fellow caucus members and colleagues was reflected in the reputation he built
13 within his own caucus and bonds forged across the aisle; and

14 Whereas, Tim served the people of our state on a bipartisan basis as the
15 Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services in the cabinet
16 of Republican Governor Tommy Thompson from 1987 to 1988; and

17 Whereas, Tim began a twenty-year private sector career at Blue Cross Blue
18 Shield in 1988; and

19 Whereas, Tim returned to elected office by winning a seat on the Janesville
20 School Board in 2007 and later winning election to another term in his former seat
21 in the State Senate in 2010; and

22 Whereas, in 2008, Governor Jim Doyle appointed him to co-chair a state task
23 force to save the Janesville General Motors plant; and

24 Whereas, Tim served from 2011 to 2015 in the Wisconsin State Senate and

1 served on committees relating to a diverse range of issues including economic
2 development, veterans, military affairs, state and federal relations, information
3 technology, workforce development, small business, tourism, education, insurance,
4 and housing; and

5 Whereas, during this time, Tim was a fierce unapologetic advocate and
6 champion for working families, union rights, collective bargaining and basic
7 fairness to workers, and access to the ballot box; and

8 Whereas, in 2011 Tim made a good-faith effort to negotiate with then-
9 Governor Scott Walker's office concerning the provisions in what would be 2011 Act
10 10 related to collective bargaining, underscoring his dedication to finding common
11 ground and representing the interests of Wisconsin workers even in times of
12 extreme partisanship; and

13 Whereas, many of Tim's efforts, both as a public servant and private citizen,
14 focused on attaining equal opportunities for all children, fighting for racial and
15 gender equality, putting an end to partisan gerrymandering and maintaining open,
16 accountable, and transparent state government; and

17 Whereas, during his return to the state legislature, Tim struck up a friendship
18 and partnership with former Senate Majority Leader Dale Schultz, a Republican
19 from Richland Center, who traveled the state with him for years urging the state to
20 adopt nonpartisan redistricting and end gerrymandering; and

21 Whereas, Tim's lifelong commitment to serving his community and the State
22 of Wisconsin included serving as a board member of Big Brothers of Janesville, the
23 Janesville YMCA, the Les Aspin Center for Government, Everyone Cooperating to
24 Help Others (ECHO), the Janesville Teacher Diversity Board, Forward Janesville,

1 WisconsinEye, Common Cause in Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Fair Elections
2 Project; and

3 Whereas, Tim founded the Tim Cullen Government Institute, allowing 11th
4 graders to meet with state and local government leaders—making government
5 more responsive and accessible and fostering the next generation of leaders; and

6 Whereas, Tim authored three books sharing his insight and experience:
7 “Ringside Seat: Wisconsin Politics, the 1970s to Scott Walker”; “Disassembled: A
8 Native Son on Janesville and General Motors”; and “Wisconsin Gerrymandering:
9 The Fight for Permanent Fair Maps and Why it Matters”; and

10 Whereas, the proceeds from his published books benefit two programs that
11 recognize the need for teachers of color in local school districts and encourage
12 diverse students to become teachers—the Janesville Multicultural Teacher
13 Scholarship Fund, which Tim started in 2008 and through which eleven
14 participants of color have been hired and 20 students are currently in the pipeline
15 to become teachers, and Beloit’s similar Grow Your Own Multicultural Teacher
16 Scholarship Program; and

17 Whereas, Tim will be remembered as an incredible husband to his late wife
18 Barbara, a caring and dedicated father and grandfather, a devoted friend and
19 mentor, and a beloved member of the Janesville community; and

20 Whereas, Tim’s lifelong commitment to bipartisanship and good government,
21 to fighting for the working class, and to improving the lives of all Wisconsinites will
22 continue to have a positive impact on the Janesville community and the entire State
23 of Wisconsin; now, therefore, be it

24 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the members of

1 the Wisconsin Legislature honor the life, legacy, and public service of Senator Tim
2 Cullen and extend their deepest condolences to his family and friends, colleagues,
3 and all those who knew him.

4 (END)