

Press Release - Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

Dr. Dorothy Height to Receive Congressional Gold Medal
Clinton Sponsors Bill to Honor Civil Rights Leader

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington, DC - Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton announced that the Senate gave final approval last night to legislation awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Dorothy I. Height in recognition of her great service to the nation. Senator Clinton introduced this legislation in June. Representative Diane E. Watson (CA) sponsored the legislation in the House. The bill is now on its way to the President for his signature.

"Dr. Height has been speaking out and acting on behalf of African-American women since before many of us were born. Her inspirational leadership has moved hearts and her practical ideas have moved minds. It was an honor for me to sponsor this legislation," Senator Clinton said.

The Senator added, "Her brilliant, strong, compassionate, and tireless dedication to the cause of justice has improved the lives not only of African-American women, but of all Americans. It is only fitting that such a prestigious award should be bestowed on Dr. Height."

Senator Clinton obtained 68 co-sponsors for this legislation, demonstrating the bipartisan recognition that Dr. Height is a true American heroine.

"I would like to thank Diane Watson for her tireless pursuit of this in the House. She taught many of her House colleagues about Dr. Height's tremendous contributions to our nation and worked tirelessly to get the House to pass the bill. I truly appreciate her hard work," Senator Clinton said.

Dr. Height, still actively fighting for justice for all Americans at the age of 91, is recognized as one of the preeminent social and civil rights activists of our time, particularly in the struggle for equality, social justice and human rights for all peoples. Her public career spans over 65 years. Beginning as a civil rights advocate in the 1930s, she soon gained prominence through her tireless efforts to promote integration in education, to register and educate voters, and to increase the visibility and status of women in our society. Dr. Height has labored to provide hope for children and their

families living in impoverished urban areas, and she is responsible for many of the advances made by women and African Americans over the course of the last century.

Dr. Height was the only female member of the "Big Six " civil rights leaders, which included Whitney Young, A. Phillip Randolph, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, and Roy Wilkins, while strategies were developed for the civil rights movement. She was a valued consultant on human and civil rights issues to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and she encouraged President Eisenhower to desegregate the Nation 's schools and President Johnson to appoint African-American women to sub-Cabinet posts.

Dr. Height has been President of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) since 1957, a position to which she was appointed upon the retirement of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune. NCNW is currently the umbrella organization for 250 local groups and 38 national groups engaged in economic development and other issues of special concern to women.

Dr. Height has also been at the forefront of AIDS education, both nationally and internationally, and under her direction, NCNW established offices in West Africa and South Africa and worked to improve the conditions of women throughout Africa and the world.

Dr. Height has also been central to the success of 2 two other influential women's organizations, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Specifically, as president and executive board member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Dr. Height left the sorority more efficient and globally focused with a centralized headquarters. Her work with the (YWCA) led to its **integration and more active participation in the civil rights movement.**