



Office of The Mayor Celina Benitez

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Monday, March 17, 2025

Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Support for House Bill 493 – Public Schools - Commemorative Day - Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Honorable Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

On behalf of the City of Mount Rainier, I am writing to express our strong support for **House Bill 493**, which designates November 14 as “Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day” in Maryland’s public schools.

This important legislation not only honors Ruby Bridges’ historic role in desegregating public schools but also provides an opportunity for students across the state to engage in meaningful discussions about civil rights, diversity, and social justice.

Our community has already demonstrated a strong commitment to this initiative. The Mount Rainier Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) has been an active participant in recognizing Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, and in the following year, Thomas Stone Elementary also received an award for organizing their own walk. These efforts reflect the enthusiasm and dedication of our schools in fostering conversations about equality, history, and the power of civic action.

Additionally, as Mayor of Mount Rainier, I have taken official steps to support this initiative by issuing a proclamation declaring “Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day” in our city. This proclamation underscores our city’s dedication to honoring Ruby Bridges’ courage and to reinforcing the importance of inclusive education in our schools.

House Bill 493 will further institutionalize these efforts by ensuring that every public school in Maryland has the opportunity to commemorate Ruby Bridges and engage students in learning about the ongoing struggle for educational equity. We urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass this bill and join us in fostering a more just and inclusive future for our students.

We urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on HB 493** and support its passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office 301-985-6585 or via email

MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org

Sincerely,

Celina R. Benitez

Mayor Celina R. Benitez, City of Mount Rainier