

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

HOUSE
RESOLUTION 1025

By: Waldron

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution honoring the life and legacy of Kate Barnard; recognizing Kate Barnard as a pioneering advocate for justice and equity in Oklahoma; proclaiming May 23 as Kate Barnard Day in the State of Oklahoma; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Catherine Ann "Kate" Barnard was born on May 23, 1875, in Geneva, Nebraska, and moved to Oklahoma at the age of 12 where she became a devout Catholic and lifelong servant of the people; and

WHEREAS, Kate Barnard was the first woman elected to statewide office in the United States, serving two terms as the Oklahoma Commissioner of Charities beginning in 1907 at a time when women in Oklahoma did not yet have the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, Kate Barnard was responsible for the passage of over thirty (30) statutory laws, many of which laid the foundation for the modern Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services, and Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; and

1 WHEREAS, the fearless advocacy of Kate Barnard extended to
2 improving conditions for the working class, addressing child labor,
3 expanding access to education, and reforming the prison and mental
4 health systems; and

5 WHEREAS, despite retaliation by powerful political and
6 industrial interests, including defunding her office, Kate Barnard
7 remained steadfast in her mission to return stolen oil lands and
8 financial assets to Native American children, securing over One
9 Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) on their behalf; and

10 WHEREAS, the work of Kate Barnard continues to inspire
11 generations of advocates, policymakers, and public servants, and as
12 such, her legacy is honored with a statue in the Oklahoma State
13 Capitol and the naming of the Kate Barnard Community Corrections
14 Center; and

15 WHEREAS, the enduring message from Kate Barnard to future
16 generations stating, "I bequeath the example of my public life to
17 the youth of the world ..." calls us to uphold justice, integrity, and
18 compassion in public service.

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
20 OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 60TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

21 THAT the Oklahoma House of Representatives hereby honors the
22 life and legacy of Kate Barnard, a trailblazing woman of faith,
23 courage, and conviction.

1 THAT May 23 shall be proclaimed Kate Barnard Day in the State of
2 Oklahoma to commemorate her contributions to justice, equity, and
3 public welfare.

4 THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Oklahoma
5 Historical Society, the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women,
6 and the Saint Joseph Old Cathedral in downtown Oklahoma City.

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