



## 2025 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 26

April 15, 2025 - Introduced 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, cosponsored by Senators SPREITZER, CARPENTER, DRAKE, HESSELBEIN, L. JOHNSON, LARSON, PFAFF, RATCLIFF, ROYS, SMITH, WALL and WIRCH. Referred to Committee on Rules.

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 assembly, the senate 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)