



Congressional Record

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House of Representatives

February 27, 2024

Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate a true public servant, Dr. Cynthia Johnson. Her commitment to service in the community began at an early age while she accompanied her mother on weekly deliveries for Meals on Wheels and participated in other community service endeavors. Dr. Johnson developed a compassionate determination to make a positive impact on others' lives. Her family's unwavering support, appreciation for diversity, and the passion to serve others have shaped her servant leadership style.

Johnson is a native of St. Petersburg, where she grew up as the youngest of eight children. Her early experiences in the local public school system instilled in her a deep appreciation for education. She is a first-generation college student and received her bachelor's degree in education from Florida Memorial University and a doctorate in educational leadership & organization from Nova Southeastern University. Dr. Johnson also received her certification from Cornell University in diversity, equity, and inclusion and she later received the distinguished certification as a Master Economic Development Practitioner.

Dr. Johnson has more than 24 years of experience in economic development and over 27 years in leadership training and development. She has worked in Pinellas County government since 2000, where she currently serves as the Director of Pinellas County Economic Development. In her dual role as the Director of the Pinellas County Economic Development and a community change agent, she is committed to lighting the way for others.

Dr. Johnson has a wealth of knowledge in diversity, equity and inclusion. She is a fierce advocate for public policies and business practices that lift people, businesses and non-profits agencies. As a trusted advisor to businesses large and small, government agencies, policymakers, and community leaders throughout Florida, she has built her career around the diverse and inclusive space of economic development. As an economic development practitioner, trainer, mentor, and educator, she has supported hundreds of individuals with the creation, retention, and expansion of their businesses. She specializes in partner relations, federal and state grants management and compliance, business and strategic planning, entrepreneurial development, finance, and small business innovation.

She is also passionate about cultivating the next generation of leaders and dedicates her free time to mentorship and community involvement. Dr. Johnson is a member of the St. Petersburg Chapter of the Links and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She has served on numerous boards including the Grow Smarter Steering Committee at the St. Petersburg Area Chamber, Chair of the Enterprise Florida Urban Working Group, Chair of Small Business Vendor Relations for Super Bowl XLIII in Tampa, and member of the Moffitt Cancer Center African American Advisory Board. She also actively supports the National Negro College Fund and advocates for participation in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the United States. Dr. Johnson is married to "the best husband ever," Kevin, and for over 21 years their four children and blended family have urged her on in service.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am honored to recognize the outstanding accomplishments, leadership and service of Dr. Cynthia Johnson and her dedicated commitment to diversity and uplifting her neighbors in the Tampa Bay community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Castor". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Kathy Castor
United States Representative
Florida – District 14