

Stockton, Calif. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton) spoke today at the Aspire Rosa Parks Academy in remembrance of Rosa Parks’ 100th birthday.

Rosa Parks, best known for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger in 1955, was a key leader of the civil rights movement. Her refusal led to her arrest which sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a seminal event in the fight for racial equality in America.

“Rosa Parks’ life was dedicated to the pursuit of a more perfect union. Four days after her arrest in 1955, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that ‘...nobody can doubt the boundless outreach of her integrity. Nobody can doubt the height of her character...,’” Congressman McNerney said.

Long before and after the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Rosa Parks worked on civil rights advocacy. In 1943 she joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and was elected secretary of the Montgomery, Alabama chapter. She co-founded the Rosa L. Parks Scholarship Foundation with The Detroit News and the City of Detroit in 1980 and established the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development in 1980.

“The Aspire Rosa Parks Academy in Stockton, California is one of many institutions that is dedicated to and inspired by Rosa Parks’ legacy. This academy celebrates Rosa Parks’ birthday each year, an important reminder on how far we have come as a nation. It brings the community together to recognize one of the true pioneers of the civil rights movement,” Congressman McNerney said.

The text of the statement submitted to the Congressional Record is below.

Rosa Parks is a true American icon and a civil rights activist. She is best known for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in Alabama to a white passenger in 1955. Consequently, she was arrested for civil disobedience.

Her courage and resolve was emblematic of the efforts made during the civil rights movement.

Her actions remain part of the story of the fight to secure every individual's right to share the American dream.

Rosa Parks' legacy continues to resonate throughout the country. For example, in my own district, the Aspire Rosa Parks Academy in Stockton, California celebrates Rosa Parks' birthday. This tremendous event serves as an important reminder of how far we have come as a nation and serves as an educational and historical tool. It brings the community together to recognize one of the true pioneers of the civil rights movement.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing not only one of our nations' most well-regarded activists and her contributions to American history, but the countless schools and groups like the Aspire Rosa Parks Academy who celebrate her legacy every year.