COMMITTEE REPORT

May 12, 2010

**S. 1434**

Introduced by Senator Campsen

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Read the first time May 12, 2010.

**THE COMMITTEE ON**

**INVITATIONS AND MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS**

To whom was referred a Concurrent Resolution (S. 1434) to request that the Department of Transportation name the newly constructed replacement bridge that crosses Cove Inlet along South Carolina Highway 703 in Charleston County, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass:

HERB KIRSH for Committee.

**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED REPLACEMENT BRIDGE THAT CROSSES COVE INLET ALONG SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 703 IN CHARLESTON COUNTY THE “BEN SAWYER MEMORIAL BRIDGE” AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS BRIDGE THAT CONTAIN THE WORDS “BEN SAWYER MEMORIAL BRIDGE”.

Whereas, Ben M. Sawyer, Chief Highway Commissioner of South Carolina from September 26, 1926, until his untimely death on December 22, 1940, worked untiringly for the construction of the State Highway System of South Carolina; and

Whereas, the historic Ben Sawyer Bridge was built in 1945 to supplant a trolley bridge between Sullivan’s Island and Mount Pleasant, which connected the barrier islands of Sullivan’s Island and Isle of Palms with the rest of the Charleston area; and

Whereas, during the replacement of the old bridge with the new bridge, the bridge was closed to traffic for just eleven days, and the new bridge opened on February 19, 2010; and

Whereas, Ben Sawyer is most famous for being the Chief Highway Commissioner on October 28, 1935, when, by executive proclamation, Governor Olin Johnston declared the Highway Department to be in a state of, “rebellion, insurrection, resistance and insurgency . . . against the laws of the State of South Carolina”; and

Whereas, Governor Johnston commissioned armed militia to take over the Highway Department, including its roadways, road projects, contracts and financial assets. The governor discharged the department’s 2,000 employees and stationed machine guns at the entrance of the Wade Hampton Building on the State House grounds, denying access to the department’s office building to all but the militia forces he commissioned to take control of the department; and

Whereas, on October 30, 1935, the four highway commissioners representing the then four congressional districts in South Carolina were C.F. Rizer, E.T. Heyward, Ralph J. Ramer, and W. Fred Lightsey. These four commissioners filed an action to enjoin Governor Johnston’s takeover of the Highway Department. Accepting the case in its original jurisdiction, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled in the case Hearon v. Calus (1935) that Governor Johnston had exceeded his executive authority in wresting control of the Highway Department from the Highway Commission and enjoined the governor and his appointed militia from further efforts to control the Highway Department; and

Whereas, it would be fitting and proper for the replacement bridge to bear the same name as its predecessor. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly request that the Department of Transportation name the newly constructed replacement bridge that crosses Cove Inlet along South Carolina Highway 703 in Charleston County the “Ben Sawyer Memorial Bridge” and erect appropriate markers or signs at this bridge that contain the words “Ben Sawyer Memorial Bridge”.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department of Transportation.

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