**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR ROBERT “BOB” CHEN OF SUMTER COUNTY, RETIRED PROFESSOR AND BUSINESSMAN, FOR HIS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO CREATING A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND TAIWAN AND PROMOTING TRADE BETWEEN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND TAIWAN.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting that the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina should pause in its deliberations to commend Bob Chen, who has served the General Assembly as an honorary trade representative to the Chinese State of Taiwan since 1985; and

Whereas, a native of Taiwan, Mr. Chen moved to the United States in 1967 with a desire to teach. After earning a master’s degree in environmental science from the University of Oklahoma in 1973, he relocated to Sumter to lead the department of environmental engineering at the former Sumter Technical College; and

Whereas, in 1980 Mr. Chen moved to Charlotte, where he served as an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte until returning to the Palmetto State in 1983; and

Whereas, after returning to South Carolina, Mr. Chen actively began fruitful efforts to build vital interactions between South Carolina and Taiwan and a partnership for trade between them; and

Whereas, by 2007, the Chinese Ministry of Economic Affairs cited Taiwan as South Carolina’s eighteenth‑largest export market of 2006, due largely to Mr. Chen’s successful endeavors. In that year alone, South Carolina benefitted from one hundred fifty‑seven million dollars in exports to Taiwan, including machinery, chemicals, electronics, and agricultural products; and

Whereas, as recently as March 2015, Mr. Chen played a pivotal role in facilitating the formation of a Memorandum of Agreement that allows residents with a Taiwanese driver’s license to forgo written and driving tests to receive a South Carolina driver’s license and also allows South Carolina’s licensed drivers to exchange their state licenses in Taiwan with those issued by that nation; and

Whereas, a successful entrepreneur, Mr. Chen owned and operated Chen and Associates general merchandise stores in Sumter and an amusement rental service before his retirement in 2003; and

Whereas, Mr. Chen’s remarkable and numerous achievements have been honored by receipt of the Order of the Palmetto from Governor Dick Riley in 1982, the Medal of Freedom from the United States Senate in 1994, the Friend of Foreign Service Medal from the Republic of China in 2004, the American Spirit Medal from the United States Senate in 2006, and the Palmetto Patriot Award by Lieutenant Governor André Bauer in 2011; and

Whereas, with deep appreciation, the South Carolina General Assembly reflects on the outstanding successes that Bob Chen has achieved in fostering a meaningful relationship between the Palmetto State and Taiwan and the trade this relationship has yielded, and the members express their profound gratitude to this humble and devoted citizen. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor Robert “Bob” Chen of Sumter County, retired professor and businessman, for his significant contributions to creating a closer relationship between the State of South Carolina and Taiwan and promoting trade between the State of South Carolina and Taiwan.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Robert “Bob” Chen.

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