**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO SALUTE ATOMIC VETERANS AND TO COMMEND KENNETH SWAIN AND THE CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH FOR RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATOMIC VETERANS BY THE ERECTION OF A MONUMENT IN THEIR HONOR.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is pleased to learn that the City of Myrtle Beach and Myrtle Beach native Kenneth Swain have worked together to establish a permanent monument honoring atomic veterans in War Bird Park; and

Whereas, the result of an initiative envisioned by Mr. Swain, who personally contributed and raised the funds for it, the monument will serve as a reminder of the sacrifices atomic veterans have made in the service of our country. Known for his philanthropy, Mr. Swain also has contributed significant funding to Coastal Carolina University, where the Kenneth E. Swain Science Hall is named in his honor. He is the son of Cleveland and Jewel Clemmons Swain and is himself an atomic veteran and advocate for atomic veterans; and

Whereas, the story of our atomic veterans began during the World War II era. More than two hundred thousand American service members, including South Carolinians, participated in aboveground nuclear tests between 1945 and 1962, served with the United States military occupation forces in or around Hiroshima and Nagasaki before 1946, or were held as prisoners of war in or near Hiroshima or Nagasaki; and

Whereas, with the aid of American service members, the United States conducted the Trinity nuclear test, the world’s first detonation of a nuclear device, in New Mexico on July 16, 1945, as a result of the Manhattan Project; and

Whereas, all these atomic veterans may have been exposed to radiation during their military service and, due to that exposure, may have developed cancer or other medical conditions; and

Whereas, many atomic veterans were prevented by secrecy laws or oaths from seeking medical care or disability compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for conditions they may have developed as a result of radiation exposure; and

Whereas, in 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act, thus freeing atomic veterans to describe their military involvement in nuclear testing in order to file for VA benefits; and

Whereas, atomic veterans may be eligible for free medical care from the VA and compensation in the form of a partial or full service‑connected disability allowance, including potential payments to a surviving spouse or children; and

Whereas,the National Association of Atomic Veterans was formed in 1979 to help atomic veterans obtain medical care and assistance; and

Whereas, cognizant of the contributions made by atomic veterans, the South Carolina General Assembly is proud to pause in its deliberations to recognize these fine members of our armed forces for their service and sacrifice. The General Assembly also wishes to extend its sincere thanks to Kenneth Swain and the City of Myrtle Beach for their part in worthily commemorating atomic veterans. 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, salute atomic veterans and commend Kenneth Swain and the City of Myrtle Beach for recognizing the contributions of atomic veterans by the erection of a monument in their honor.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Kenneth Swain.

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