**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR PINCUS KOLENDER, A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST AND CHARGING THEM WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PREVENTING SIMILAR TRAGEDIES IN THE FUTURE.

Whereas, although his story as a Holocaust survivor was one of tragedy, Pincus Kolender’s message was always one of inspiration and hope. Despite painful memories and the increasing discomfort he felt each time he retold his story, Mr. Kolender, a member of the Council on the Holocaust since its inception in 1989, continued to bear witness, to warn of the consequences of unchecked bigotry and hatred; and

Whereas, Pincus Kolender, who was born in Bochnia, Poland, near Krakow, was thirteen when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939 and was first confined in a ghetto and forced into labor for the Germans for two years. At that ghetto, in a “selection” his mother was killed before his eyes, and his grandmother, sister, and more than forty other relatives were removed, never to be seen again; and

Whereas, when he was sixteen, he, along with his brother, was sent to Auschwitz, where he suffered and witnessed the slave labor, starvation, beatings, torture, and other acts of unspeakable cruelty perpetrated by the Nazis upon their prisoners. Mr. Kolender was moved from one camp to another as Allied forces approached. During one of these moves, the Death March, he became separated from his brother, never to see him again. On April 20, 1945, while en route to another camp, the train Mr. Kolender was on came under attack by American fighter planes, and he and two others escaped by running into a Czechoslovakian forest. The three men approached a Czech farmhouse, and the family clothed, fed, and found medical care for the men. Upon news the Germans were searching for them, Mr. Kolender and his fellow escapees hid in a fox hole until American forces liberated them on May 8, 1945. Mr. Kolender waited for five years in Germany for a visa to enter the United States. He arrived in Charleston in 1950 and six months later was drafted to serve in the United States Army, in which he served for two years; and

Whereas, after building a clientele as a salesman in rural communities, he eventually opened Globe Furniture in Charleston, building the store into a fixture on upper King Street until he retired in 1989. He and his first wife, Renee, also a survivor, who passed away in 1989, raised three children and enjoyed six grandchildren. He married Janet Kolender in December of 1991, with whom he shared many wonderful years; and

Whereas, in the course of his life in the United States, Mr. Kolender spoke about his experiences during the Holocaust to more than two hundred thousand people over twenty‑five years, accepting neither remuneration nor travel expenses and finding his reward in the hearts and minds he reached with his message. He very much wanted young people to understand what happened, to hear his message, and to keep it alive. Accompanied by his wife, Janet, Mr. Kolender, in subdued tones, brought his audiences to absolute silence as he described the horrors of the systematic attempt to annihilate a race; and

Whereas, Mr. Kolender fashioned his life as a dignified and admirable model of rebellion and retribution against the attempt by the Nazis to define him as the number 161253 they tattooed on his arm. He found great joy in living and shared that joy with others, never showing a trace of bitterness; and

Whereas, in addition to his work with the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust, Mr. Kolender served on the boards of numerous Jewish charitable organizations, including Israel Bonds, Charleston Jewish Federation, and BSBI synagogue. Among his many awards are the Israel Freedom Award from Israel Bonds, the Rotary Service Above Self Award, and the Order of the Palmetto from Governor Mark Sanford. In February 2008, Pincus Kolender passed away at the venerable age of eighty‑two, leaving behind a loving family and an unforgettable legacy. He will be greatly missed. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, honor the life of Pincus Kolender, a Holocaust survivor who dedicated his life to educating people about the Holocaust and charging them with the responsibility of preventing similar tragedies in the future.

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