**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE LEGACY OF DENMARK VESEY, AN AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO LIVED FROM 1767-1822, WHO RISKED HIS OWN PRECIOUS FREEDOM AND MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SLAVERY FOR OTHERS TO BE FREE.

Whereas, born in West Africa in 1767 with the name Telemanque, Denmark Vesey was captured as a youth, sold into slavery, and brought to America; and

Whereas, in 1781, he came to the attention of Captain Vesey, a slave trader from Charleston, who purchased him because he was “struck with the beauty, alertness, and intelligence” of the youth; and

Whereas, after twenty years of faithfully serving and sailing with Captain Vesey, Denmark Vesey allegedly won a lottery prize of fifteen hundred dollars, which he used to purchase his freedom and to open a carpentry shop; and

Whereas, he acquired property and flourished in Charleston with the respect of blacks and whites alike for his skilled artisanship, prosperity, and strength; and

Whereas, because of his loathing of slavery, he became learned in the various arguments against slavery and publicly protested the abuses and exploitation of his people; and

Whereas, this political firebrand urged his brethren to resist their enslavement, and by 1818, Denmark Vesey was preaching to slaves at surrounding plantations, using the Bible to encourage slaves to believe they could be freed; and

Whereas, discovered through the betrayal of a few fearful slaves before the conspirators could execute their sophisticated plan to free as many as nine thousand slaves on July 14, 1822, the leaders of the revolt were apprehended; and

Whereas, although Denmark Vesey defended himself skillfully at his trial, he was condemned along with as many as thirty‑five others and hanged on June 23; and

Whereas, because Denmark Vesey was a founding member of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the church was suspected of involvement with the Vesey revolt during the investigation that ensued; and

Whereas, during the Vesey controversy, the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church was burned, but worship services continued after the sanctuary was rebuilt until all‑black churches were outlawed in 1834; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate acknowledge the noble life and work of Denmark Vesey and those who suffered injustices and loss of life with him in their attempts to secure freedom for their fellowmen. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor the legacy of Denmark Vesey, an African American freedom fighter who lived from 1767-1822, who risked his own precious freedom and made the ultimate sacrifice for others to be free.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Senator Clementa Pinckney, pastor of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑