**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE ORA ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN LAURENS COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION OF A NEWLY DISCOVERED CEMETERY AT THE CHURCH AND TO HONOR THE HISTORY OF THOSE BURIED THERE.

Whereas, the Laurens community will come together on July 4, 2015, to dedicate a two hundred year old slave cemetery. This newly discovered part of the Ora Associated Reform Presbyterian Church is an important and nearly lost part of the history of Laurens County and the State; and

Whereas, the Ora ARP church has been visible in the community for years, but it wasn’t until four years ago when Greg Fielder discovered an important part of the church’s history. While tracing his family genealogy, he found notes on the church membership, which included some of his relatives buried in the rear of the community cemetery; and

Whereas, Mr. Fielder visited the church and after being received kindly, he was led out back to look through the underbrush to find the graves of those buried in the cemetery. The cemetery is the final resting place for approximately forty former slaves in the area; and

Whereas, the work of discovering and restoring the cemetery was the result of collaboration between the divine, the church, and other volunteers; and

Whereas, for the past year, many volunteers have labored to free these ancestors from the bonds of nature and to create the landscape at the cemetery today. Today, a new path leads to the cemetery, the cemetery and graves have been cleared of the brush and overgrowth that once surrounded them, and a new fence protects the cemetery. A tombstone has been placed to describe details about the cemetery; and

Whereas, the members of the Senate are grateful for this astonishing discovery and honor the hard work of those who discovered and restored the cemetery as well as the history of those who rest there. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, recognize the Ora Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Laurens County on the occasion of the dedication of a newly discovered cemetery at the church and honor the history of those buried there.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Ora Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

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