**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR CHIEF ROBERT O. “BERT” POLK OF RICHLAND COUNTY, STATE FIRE MARSHAL WITH THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT, TO THANK HIM FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE, AND TO WISH HIM CONTINUED SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, for two terms of service, the State of South Carolina has enjoyed the benefit of the dedication, experience, and leadership of Chief Robert O. “Bert” Polk of Richland County, state fire marshal with the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, who will retire from his post on February 3, 2017, after a distinguished career of forty‑five years in firefighting and promoting public safety; and

Whereas, greatly respected for his expertise and dedication to excellence, Chief Polk holds advanced degrees in fire administration and business management and is recognized by the National Fire Protection Association as a Certified Fire Protection Specialist. He has served on several national committees, is a published writer, and lectures frequently on various fire‑related issues; and

Whereas, the son of a firefighter, Chief Polk began his career at the St. Petersburg (Florida) Fire Department in 1972. During his twenty‑four years of service with the department, he worked his way up the ranks to become division chief; and

Whereas, in 1996, Bert Polk accepted the position of fire chief in Moline, Illinois. Four years later, in 2000, he was appointed by then South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges as state fire marshal. In 2003, he was reconfirmed by newly elected South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford to continue in the position of state fire marshal; and

Whereas, a few months later, Chief Polk had the opportunity to leave state government and represent the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) on a full‑time basis. During his NASFM tenure, he represented the organization on a national level, dealing with state and federal government agencies on issues of fire and life safety. He was also active in fire and building code promulgation and appeared before the U.S. Senate in hearings on matters of public safety; and

Whereas, in 2010, he returned to full‑time fire service, taking up his duties as fire chief/fire marshal for a Special Purpose Fire District in Florida. He served in that capacity until his current appointment by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley in 2014; and

Whereas, at home, Chief Polk is the proud husband of Kathryn and the equally proud father of Amanda Polk Canova, Alexas Polk, and Evan Polk, who has followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather in also serving as a firefighter. In addition, the senior Polks are the delighted grandparents of two; and

Whereas, the General Assembly, grateful for the legacy of consistent commitment and excellence Chief Polk has bestowed on the people of South Carolina, takes great pleasure in wishing him well as he enters retirement and trusts he will find much enjoyment in the more leisurely pace of the days ahead. 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, recognize and honor Chief Robert O. “Bert” Polk of Richland County, state fire marshal with the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, upon the occasion of his retirement, thank him for his many years of outstanding service, and wish him continued success and happiness in all his future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Chief Robert O. “Bert” Polk.

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