**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE UPON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE GEORGE THOMAS “TOM” TURNIPSEED, FORMER SOUTH CAROLINA STATE SENATOR, OF LEXINGTON COUNTY, AND TO EXTEND THEIR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS DEVOTED FAMILY AND HIS MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate were deeply saddened to learn of the death of the Honorable George Thomas “Tom” Turnipseed at the age of eighty‑three on March 6, 2020; and

Whereas, born in Mobile, Alabama, on August 27, 1936, Tom was the son of the late Ruby Bell and George Franklin Turnipseed. He attended Lees‑McRae College on a football scholarship, later earning undergraduate and law degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While attending Chapel Hill, he met his beloved wife, Judy, and they were married in 1963; and

Whereas, a son of the Old South steeped in its culture of segregation, young Tom Turnipseed led efforts to legitimize segregated private schools that emerged following federal desegregation of public schools, and in 1968 ran the third‑party presidential campaign of former Alabama Governor George Wallace; and

Whereas, over time, Tom Turnipseed’s close work with the African American community on economic issues fostered changes in his outlook, and he evolved from a segregationist to a tireless and highly successful advocate for progressive causes; and

Whereas, embarking on a mission to represent everyday people, Tom Turnipseed moved his young family to South Carolina in 1971 and founded his law firm, Turnipseed and Associates, where he practiced law for over forty‑five years; and

Whereas, in 1976 Tom Turnipseed was elected to the Senate representing District Eight, where he served until 1980 as a civil rights leader and social activist. Serving alongside his brother, Senator David Turnipseed of Spartanburg, the pair were the first two brothers to serve simultaneously in the Senate; and

Whereas, advocating the causes of racial, social, and economic justice and equality, global peace, environmental protection, consumer rights, and mental health, Senator Turnipseed helped to lead a successful campaign that reformed electrical‑rate practices that discriminated against low‑income ratepayers and changed the method of selection of the regulatory agency, the Public Service Commission; and

Whereas, as co‑counsel for Macedonia Baptist Church in Clarendon County, he helped to win a thirty‑seven million dollar verdict against the Ku Klux Klan for burning the church in 1997; and

Whereas, Tom Turnipseed hosted popular radio shows that provided a forum for discussing diverse issues, and he was published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and many other national publications on political and human rights issues; and

Whereas, later in life, he dedicated himself to easing the plight of homelessness, serving as a board member of Homeless Helping Homeless and supporting Silent Voices, a talent showcase for homeless artists. For seventeen years, Tom and Judy Turnipseed shared food with homeless and hungry people every Sunday in Finlay Park through the Food Not Bombs initiative, finding it most meaningful; and

Whereas, a respected member of the South Carolina Bar, Tom Turnipseed served his profession as president of the South Carolina Trial Lawyers Association, and in 1998, he was honored with the Holmes Weatherly Award, the Unitarian Universalist Association’s highest honor for the pursuit of social justice; and

Whereas, together with his wife of fifty‑seven years, he reared two fine children, Jeff Turnipseed and Jeny Mathis. His children blessed him with the affection of four grandchildren whom he adored: Madeline, Davis, Sam, and Elliot; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are grateful for the life and legacy of Senator Tom Turnipseed and for the example of distinguished service and active compassion he set for all who knew him. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of the Honorable George Thomas “Tom” Turnipseed, former South Carolina State Senator, of Lexington County, and extend their deepest sympathy to his devoted family and his many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of the Honorable George Thomas “Tom” Turnipseed.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑