**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO CREATE THE POW‑MIA NATIONAL CHAIR OF HONOR COMMISSION TO IDENTIFY AND ESTABLISH AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION IN THE STATE HOUSE OR ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CAPITOL COMPLEX UPON WHICH TO PLACE A POW‑MIA NATIONAL CHAIR OF HONOR TO RECOGNIZE, HONOR, AND INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS REGARDING THE NEARLY NINETY THOUSAND AMERICAN SERVICE MEMBERS WHO REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR SINCE THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

Whereas, The POW‑MIA National Chair of Honor "One Empty Seat" is an initiative that was created to recognize and honor the nearly ninety thousand American service members who have been designated as unaccounted for since World War I; and

Whereas, these unoccupied seats are dedicated to the memory of the courageous men and women and to the sacrifices each of them made in service to our country; and

Whereas, the Chair of Honor will remain perpetually empty, symbolizing those American prisoners of war and those missing in action who may never return; and

Whereas, the Chair of Honor also serves as a reminder to all of the sacrifices that the men and women serving in our nation’s armed forces have made to ensure our continued freedom and way of life; and

Whereas, sponsored by the Rolling Thunder organization and Hussey Seating, the program has expanded rapidly, with chairs now dedicated in the United States Capitol, state capitals, municipal buildings, county courthouses, public facilities, professional and collegiate sports stadiums, and even on board the USS Constitution; and

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly believe that a permanent memorial on the State House grounds to recognize and honor these brave American service members not only educates the public that tens of thousands of prisoners of war and missing in action soldiers remain unaccounted for, but also preserves their distinguished legacy for future generations. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. The POW‑MIA National Chair of Honor Commission is created to identify and establish an appropriate location in the State House or on the grounds of the Capitol Complex upon which to place a POW‑MIA National Chair of Honor to recognize, honor, and increase public awareness regarding the nearly ninety thousand American service members who remain unaccounted for since World War I. The commission is empowered and directed to raise private funds, to receive private grants, to receive gifts to carry out the purpose for which it is created, and to recommend the eventual location of the Chair of Honor, provided that this monument must be funded entirely by private funds. By January 1, 2020, the commission shall report the proposed design, location, and dedication date of the POW‑MIA National Chair of Honor to the General Assembly. The commission shall consult the Division of General Services regarding any proposed location and other requirements, and the division shall advise and render necessary service to the commission on this matter. In carrying out these duties, the commission may consult and coordinate with the Rolling Thunder organization as it deems appropriate. Upon the dedication of the POW‑MIA National Chair of Honor, the commission shall dissolve. The final decision regarding the location of the Chair of Honor rests with the General Assembly. Upon dissolution, the State shall ensure proper maintenance of the monument as is done for other historical monuments on the grounds of the Capitol Complex. The commission must be comprised of three members of the Senate to be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, three members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and three members, who may or may not be members of the General Assembly, to be appointed by the Governor. Notwithstanding Section 8‑13‑770 of the 1976 Code or another provision of law, members of the General Assembly may be appointed to this commission and may serve on the commission, which must not be considered an office of honor or profit of this State. Commission members are not entitled to receive the subsistence, mileage, and per diem otherwise provided by law for members of state boards, committees, and commissions.

SECTION 2. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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