**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR JOE ENGEL, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER, FOR HIS ROLE IN HELPING THE WORLD TO REMEMBER; TO MEMORIALIZE YOM HASHOAH, HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY; AND TO DESIGNATE MAY 1, 2019, AS “JOE ENGEL DAY” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the members of the South Carolina General Assembly should pause in their deliberations to commend Joe Engel for his willingness to share his story in order that people never forget the Holocaust, a genocide during World War II, in which Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews, around two‑thirds of the Jewish population of Europe, in the name of racial purity; and

Whereas, born in Poland in 1927, he grew up in a large and loving home in a farming-community town of some ten thousand people about twenty miles from the Polish capital of Warsaw; and

Whereas, after the German Army defeated the inferior Polish forces during World War II, Mr. Engel’s town became a ghetto. No medical care was provided, residents were given barely enough food to survive, and groups were soon loaded onto cattle cars and transported to German concentration camps. His parents were sent in the first group, and he never saw them again; and

Whereas, in 1942, the Nazis sent Mr. Engel, aged fourteen, with two of his brothers and a sister to the infamous Birkenau Concentration Camp where the brothers were separated from their sister. Prisoners were lined up and had their clothing removed and replaced with prison uniforms, their hair cut, and numbers tattooed on their arms. They soon became aware of huge gas chambers being built. Prisoners died from beatings, starvation, disease, and gassing; and

Whereas, later that same year, he was sent to the notorious Auschwitz camp to learn bricklaying. Three years later, the retreating and soon-to-be-defeated Germans began moving surviving inmates deeper into Germany, without food or water in cattle cars with no roofs. Mr. Engel escaped by climbing up the wall of the car and jumping into the snow where he buried himself; and

Whereas, following his daring escape, Mr. Engel was fed by some railroad workers who did not realize he was Jewish, and he eventually found and joined an underground resistance group of some two hundred that moved in small groups destroying police stations and bombing munition trains and trucks as the war ground to a halt; and

Whereas, he was liberated by the Russian Army, was held in a displaced-persons camp in Germany, and later returned to Poland where he learned that two of his brothers had survived, as well as his sister who was living in Belgium. Through a refugee agency, he made contact with an aunt in the United States, who provided an affidavit allowing him to immigrate in the late 1940s; and

Whereas, Mr. Engel settled in Charleston, and after several years of struggling to support himself, crucial resources came from philanthropist Anita Zucker’s father‑in‑law, enabling him to open a dry‑cleaning business which he operated for thirty-six years; and

Whereas, in Charleston he became a community leader, teacher, and philanthropist, speaking regularly in local schools, as well as the College of Charleston, about his Holocaust experience; and

Whereas, since 1994, Mr. Engel has fulfilled a promise to himself that he would repeat his story to ensure that people would never forget. To that end, he has maintained a daily habit for a quarter of a century of walking to the Charleston Battery where he takes a walk for exercise and then perches on a bench with a sign around his neck, “Holocaust Survivor.” There he meets people from around the world, drawn to him by his sign, and when they stop to talk to him, he tells them a story they never will forget. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution. recognize and honor Joe Engel, Holocaust survivor and community leader, for his role in helping the world to remember; memorialize Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day; and designate May 1, 2019, as “Joe Engel Day” in South Carolina.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Joe Engel.

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