**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR JAMES “JIM” L. FELDER, ONE OF THE FIRST THREE AFRICAN AMERICANS ELECTED TO SERVE IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA LEGISLATURE AFTER RECONSTRUCTION, AND TO EXPRESS PROFOUND GRATITUDE FOR HIS SEMINAL CONTRIBUTIONS AS A CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER AND ACTIVIST AND IN HIS ROLES IN COUNTY AND STATE GOVERNMENT.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting that the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in its deliberation to acknowledge James “Jim” L. Felder, one of the first three African Americans elected to serve in the state legislature after Reconstruction; and

Whereas, the period in United States history from 1865 to 1877 following the Civil War is called Reconstruction, during which attempts were made to redress inequities of slavery and its political, social, and economic legacy and to solve problems of readmitting the eleven states that had seceded from the Union; and

Whereas, an experiment in interracial democracy, Reconstruction brought far‑reaching changes to America’s political life, including new national laws and constitutional amendments that forever altered the federal system and the definition of American citizenship; and

Whereas, in the South, a politically mobilized black community came together with white allies during Reconstruction to fill offices until the period ended. In the modern era, African‑American leaders emerged to renew the work of those Reconstruction leaders; and

Whereas, a native of Sumter, Jim Felder was born on April 4, 1939, and earned a bachelor’s degree from Clark Atlanta University and a juris doctorate from the Howard University School of Law, as well as a master of laws from Atlanta Law School, and he received a doctorate of humane letters from the College of Charleston; and

Whereas, in the patriotic tradition of the sons of South Carolina, he served with distinction in the United States Army, earning the Army Commendation Medal, and during his tour of duty, he was selected to head the casket team for the late President John F. Kennedy in November 1963; and

Whereas, Dr. Felder spent his early adult years in Washington, D.C., and after graduation from Howard University, he returned to the Palmetto State to direct the South Carolina Voter Education Project in 1967. He coordinated a statewide voter registration drive that registered more than two hundred thousand African Americans to vote in the Palmetto State in just eighteen months; and

Whereas, he served as the executive director of the South Carolina conference of the NAACP and as a professor and chair of the Department of Business and Economics at Allen University; and

Whereas, in 1970, Dr. Felder was one of the first three black men elected to the South Carolina Legislature since Reconstruction, and in 1973, he became the first African‑American assistant solicitor in the State; and

Whereas, after spending his lifetime working for justice as a Civil Rights activist, Jim Felder passed away on February 14, 2017. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor James “Jim” L. Felder, one of the first three African Americans elected to serve in the South Carolina legislature after Reconstruction, and express profound gratitude for his seminal contributions as a Civil Rights leader and activist and in his roles in county and state government.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of James “Jim” L. Felder.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑