**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR SERGEANT ISAAC WOODARD, JR., WHO SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY DURING WORLD WAR II, UPON THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF THE HISTORICAL MARKER REMEMBERING HIM.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in their deliberations to remember Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr., and the injustice of the brutal attack against him in 1946; and

Whereas, born in Fairfield County on March 18, 1919, Isaac Woodard grew up in Goldsboro, North Carolina, and attended local segregated schools; and

Whereas, in 1942, he enlisted in the United States Army, serving his country with distinction during World War II while stationed in New Guinea, attaining the rank of Sergeant, and he was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic‑Pacific Campaign Medal, and World War II Victory Medal; and

Whereas, on February 12, 1946, just hours after he was honorably discharged from his military service, he was aboard a Greyhound bus in South Carolina when the bus driver took offense with him. The driver summoned a local police chief who took offense when Sergeant Woodard did not address him as “sir”; and

Whereas, the chief used a nightstick to beat Sergeant Woodard who was still in uniform until he was unconscious, he violently drove the weapon into each of Sergeant Woodard’s eye sockets, a savage attack which completely and permanently blinded him; and

Whereas, Sergeant Woodard was fined fifty dollars, presumably for drunk and disorderly conduct, and his family eventually located him in a local hospital where he had received substandard care; and

Whereas, he traveled to New York City, where the NAACP publicized his story. Orson Welles featured the heart‑rending story on his national radio program, and Woody Guthrie composed a song titled, “The Blinding of Isaac Woodard”; and

Whereas, President Harry Truman’s response to Civil Rights activists who recounted the saga of Sergeant Woodard’s brutal beating was to embark on unprecedentedly frank speeches and actions in favor of black equality; and

Whereas, when the President ordered a federal investigation into the attack, the police chief was indicted, went to trial in federal court in South Carolina, and was acquitted by an all‑white jury; and

Whereas, although no one was ever held responsible or found guilty for the serious injuries sustained by Sergeant Woodard, the Town of Batesburg‑Leesville reopened the case of the charges against him and dismissed them as wholly unfounded; and

Whereas, Isaac Woodard died on September 23, 1992, in Bronx, New York City and was buried in Calverton National Cemetery in Calverton, New York; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives, knowing that no words can repair the injury inflicted on Isaac Woodard, is, nonetheless, grateful that this episode illuminated the critical need for and eventually facilitated momentous Civil Rights reform in our State and nation. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr., who served in the United States Army during World War II, upon the occasion of the unveiling of the historical marker remembering him.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr.

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