**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR HERBERT U. FIELDING, THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN ELECTED TO SERVE IN THE STATE’S HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SINCE RECONSTRUCTION, AND TO EXPRESS PROFOUND GRATITUDE FOR HIS PIONEERING OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE MODERN ERA.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting that the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in its deliberation to acknowledge the late Herbert U. Fielding, the first African American elected to serve in the State House of Representatives since 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 federal 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, born in Charleston on July 6, 1923, Herbert U. Fielding was the son of Julius and Sadie Fielding, and in the patriotic tradition of the sons of South Carolina, he served with distinction in the United States Army during World War II; and

Whereas, upon completion of his military service, he earned a bachelor’s degree from West Virginia State College in 1948; and

Whereas, in 1952, Mr. Fielding became president and CEO of Fielding Home for Funeral Services, the family business founded in 1912 by his father, and the largest African-American owned and operated funeral home in the State of South Carolina; and

Whereas, he became involved in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and often paid the bail for Civil Rights’ activists, picketers, and demonstrators, and not only encouraged African Americans to vote, but also mobilized them to memorize the Constitution in order to gain voting rights; and

Whereas, in 1970, Mr. Fielding became the first African American to be elected to serve as a representative in the South Carolina House of Representatives since Reconstruction; and

Whereas, he served for three years and returned to the State House in 1983. In 1985, he was elected to the South Carolina Senate, where he served until 1992 and became the chairperson of the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus in 1990; and

Whereas, a vestry member at Calvary Episcopal Church in Charleston, Mr. Fielding served the State with devotion in such organizations as the South Carolina Commission on Vocational Rehabilitation, the University of South Carolina Budget Board, and the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission; and

Whereas, the state Department of Transportation honored him by naming Highway 61 from the James Island Expressway to South Carolina Route 61 in Charleston County as the Herbert U. Fielding Connector; and

Whereas, although Mr. Fielding passed away on August 10, 2015, his life and work continue to inspire many to follow in his footsteps. 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 Herbert U. Fielding, the first African American elected to serve in the state’s House of Representatives since Reconstruction, and express profound gratitude for his pioneering of Civil Rights in the modern era.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Herbert U. Fielding.

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