**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF FRIEDA MITCHELL, A CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER IN BEAUFORT COUNTY AND ONE OF THE FIRST TWO AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, the month of March is Women’s History Month and celebrates the significant contributions women of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds have made to the world. Women have always played a critical role in the vitality and diversity of our communities, and are essential to ensuring South Carolina is well‑represented; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives recognize Frieda Mitchell, for her tireless work to improve the life of African American South Carolinians, with a special interest focus on children; and

Whereas, Frieda Mitchell was born in Sheldon on June 20, 1925, the daughter of farming parents who worked odd jobs to earn enough money to allow their four children to attend private schools, as there was no school bus transportation of African American children to attend the then segregated high school in Beaufort; and

Whereas, Frieda attended Mather School, a private boarding school for girls, where she studied business education and excelled with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. She continued her education at Allen University, but was unable to finish her studies, as her parents lacked the financial resources to continue to support her; and

Whereas, Mrs. Mitchell became an educator, initially teaching the first grade. She traveled for a handful of years, in search of greater prosperity, before returning to accept a position at a Beaufort County school. It was at this time she observed the dismal living conditions and lack of political opportunities of many of the residents within her community. Determined to make a difference, she took on a great responsibility and organized a massive voter registration campaign. Her efforts were to great success, as the first African American was elected to the Beaufort County Council; and

Whereas, as the years continued, Frieda became the organizer and chairperson of the Beaufort County Education Community (BCEC), the central force for school desegregation. The efforts of BCEC led to a landmark election in 1968, as Frieda Mitchell and Agnes Sherman were the first African Americans elected to a school board in South Carolina. Their efforts, jointly, played a major role in the desegregation of the public schools in Beaufort County; and

Whereas, throughout her long life, Mrs. Mitchell worked diligently to address the varied needs of the state’s rural poor. As a co‑director of a community development project at Penn Community Services Center, she used her position to direct a particular spotlight onto daycare needs for the working poor. In 1970, she convened a historic meeting of numerous programs and state agencies to organize United Communities for Child Development (UCCD), of which she became the first executive director. This program received national attention, and catapulted Frieda Mitchell into a position as a national figure in major daycare policy discussions. Her efforts, once only local, were escalated throughout the Southern states, as well as oversees in South Africa when the W.K. Kellogg Foundation recruited her to conduct an international tour; and

Whereas, Frieda Mitchell’s dream was always the betterment of the lives of children. Her efforts, whether as an organizer or as the individual who helped secure a five hundred thousand dollar grant for the construction of a modern childcare facility, deeply and directly impacted the lives of many. Her fearlessness and willingness to lead caused great change to the benefit of many of the citizens of both this great State and the nation as a whole. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor the life and achievements of Frieda Mitchell, a civil rights leader in Beaufort County and one of the first two African American school board members in South Carolina.

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