**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF FORT SUMTER (APRIL 12‑13, 1861).

Whereas, two forts stand at the entrance of Charleston Harbor. Patriots inside a palmetto‑log fort, later named Fort Moultrie, defeated the Royal Navy there in 1776. As Charleston blazed a path toward secession, construction on a new fort, Fort Sumter, proceeded. The South Carolina militia fired on the U.S. garrison at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, opening the Civil War, which redefined American freedom; and

Whereas, during the previous year, on December 20, 1860, South Carolina had seceded from the United States, and by February 2, 1861, six more states had followed suit. Southern delegates met on February 4, 1861, in Montgomery, Alabama, and established the Confederate States of America, with Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi elected as its provisional president. Confederate militia forces began seizing United States forts and property throughout the South. With a lame‑duck president in office and a controversial president‑elect poised to succeed him, the crisis approached a boiling point and exploded at Fort Sumter; and

Whereas, on April 9, President Davis and the Confederate cabinet decided to strike a blow and then the president ordered Brigadier General P.G.T. Beauregard, commander of the growing Southern forces in Charleston, to take Fort Sumter. The next day, three of Beauregard’s aides sailed to the fort and courteously demanded the garrison’s surrender. The Union commander, Major Robert Anderson, was equally courteous but refused to comply: “I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication demanding the evacuation of this fort, and to say, in reply thereto, that it is a demand with which I regret that my sense of honor, and of my obligations to my Government, prevent my compliance.” He also informed the delegation that the garrison’s supplies would last only until April 15; and

Whereas, notwithstanding any personal regard he may have felt toward Anderson, a fellow West Point graduate, Beauregard had his orders. He instructed his aide‑de‑camp to send the major this formal heads‑up on April 12 at 3:30 a.m.: “SIR: By authority of Brigadier‑General Beauregard, commanding the Provisional Forces of the Confederate States, we have the honor to notify you that he will open the fire of his batteries on Fort Sumter in one hour from this time”; and

Whereas, on April 12 at 4:30 a.m., a flaming mortar shot arced into the air and exploded over Fort Sumter. On this signal, Confederate guns from fortifications and floating batteries around Charleston Harbor roared to life. Outmanned, outgunned, undersupplied, and nearly surrounded by enemy batteries, Anderson waited until about 7:00 a.m. to respond. Captain Abner Doubleday volunteered to fire the first cannon at the Confederates, a 32‑pound shot that bounced off the roof of the Iron Battery on Cummings Point; and

Whereas, for nearly thirty‑six hours, the two sides kept up this unequal contest. A shell struck the flagpole of Fort Sumter, and the American colors fell to the earth, only to be hoisted back up the hastily repaired pole. Confederates fired hotshot from Fort Moultrie into Fort Sumter. Buildings began to burn within the fort. With no more resources, Anderson surrendered Fort Sumter to Confederate forces; and

Whereas, on April 13, 1861, at 2:30 p.m., Major Anderson and his men were allowed to strike their colors, fire a 100‑gun salute, and board a ship bound for New York. The only casualties at Fort Sumter occurred during the 100‑gun salute, when a round exploded prematurely, killing Private Daniel Hough and mortally wounding another soldier; and

Whereas, also on April 13, the day of Fort Sumter’s surrender, Governor Francis W. Pickens of South Carolina made a public speech outside the Charleston Hotel in reference to the attack. His Excellency Governor Pickens stated, “The events of the last day or two are well calculated to fill the heart with gratitude to a superintending Providence for his kindness in protecting so many brave and good men from misfortunes incident to all.” The attack was over, but the war had just begun. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize the one hundred sixtieth anniversary of the Battle of Fort Sumter (April 12‑13, 1861).

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