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**S. 1326**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

Senate Resolution

Sponsors: Senator Garrett

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Summary: Sgt. John Robert Coker, valor award

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 5/2/2024 Senate Introduced and adopted (Senate Journal‑page 6)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=1326&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[05/02/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/1326_20240502.docx)

A senate RESOLUTION

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR SERGEANT JOHN ROBERT COKER OF THE MCCORMICK COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE FOR DECISIVELY AND COURAGEOUSLY TAKING ACTION THAT POTENTIALLY SAVED THE LIVES OF INNOCENT RESIDENTS WHILE PUTTING HIMSELF IN HARM’S WAY ON JUNE 18, 2023, AND TO EXPRESS THE DEEPEST GRATITUDE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE FOR SERGEANT COKER’S SELFLESS SERVICE.

Whereas, in the early morning of June 18, 2023, Sergeant John Robert Coker and Deputy Heather Campbell were dispatched to the Greenfield Road area of McCormick County in reference to an armed‑robbery 911 call. The robbery suspect was carrying two bookbags, one of them containing a rifle, and was walking toward Highway 378 in McCormick; and

Whereas, about thirty‑five minutes later, Sergeant Coker notified dispatch he was out with the suspect on Mears Lane. Sergeant Coker was driving his marked MCSO patrol vehicle and was wearing his MCSO uniform, which identified him as a law enforcement officer. The sergeant attempted to talk to the suspect while noticing the suspect was carrying a duffel bag that contained an AR‑style rifle in it. Sergeant Coker convinced the suspect to put the bag down and step away from it. The sergeant informed the suspect he only wanted to talk to him; and

Whereas, during the encounter, the suspect backed his body away from Sergeant Coker, pulled a Taurus .357 caliber revolver out of his pants pocket, and pointed it at the sergeant. Sergeant Coker then grabbed the revolver, but the suspect was able to pull away. The sergeant then drew his MCSO‑issued GLOCK 23, semi‑automatic, .40 caliber pistol. The suspect fired one shot, which struck Sergeant Coker in the left hand, obliterating his ring‑finger knuckle. The bullet traveled through his hand, exiting at the palm area and into his right upper chest area, just above the Kevlar panel of his body armor. Sergeant Coker fired three shots at the suspect, striking the suspect in the left elbow, left chest, and neck area, neutralizing the suspect and eliminating the threat. The exchange of gunfire lasted less than three seconds; and

Whereas, Deputy Campbell called Sergeant Coker to come to her to get him behind her vehicle to provide additional cover, and the sergeant informed Deputy Campbell that the suspect still had a gun. EMS being en route, Deputy Campbell began rendering medical aid to the sergeant, who was now lying on the road, and she continued to give medical aid while Sergeant Eric New of the McCormick Police Department, who had responded to a radio call, secured the subject. EMS arrived on the scene and continued to triage Sergeant Coker, and the twenty‑seven‑year law enforcement veteran was transported to Augusta University Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia; and

Whereas, according to the SLED toxicology report, the suspect’s blood contained methamphetamine and amphetamine; and

Whereas, an act of valor is considered to be above and beyond the call of duty, a deed exhibiting exceptional courage, extraordinary decisiveness and presence of mind, along with unusual swiftness of action, regardless of personal safety, in an attempt to save or protect human life; and

Whereas, Sergeant Coker was confronted with an armed suspect who engaged him in a deadly force situation that left him no other options. His instinctive thinking and cool‑headed reaction that morning potentially saved the lives of innocent residents as he put himself in harm’s way; and

Whereas, with great pride, the members of the South Carolina Senate join in lifting up their united voice of praise to salute the courage, skill, and dedication of Sergeant John Robert Coker. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Sergeant John Robert Coker of the McCormick County Sheriff’s Office for decisively and courageously taking action that potentially saved the lives of innocent residents while putting himself in harm’s way on June 18, 2023, and express the deepest gratitude of the South Carolina Senate for Sergeant Coker’s selfless service.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Sergeant John Robert Coker.

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