**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 570**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

Concurrent Resolution

Sponsors: Senator Gambrell

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Introduced in the Senate on April 16, 2025

Introduced in the House on April 22, 2025

Adopted by the General Assembly on April 22, 2025

Summary: Medal of Valor - Anderson Co. Sergeants Ruff, McCown, and Earwood

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

4/16/2025 Senate Introduced, adopted, sent to House ([Senate Journal‑page 10](h:\sj\20250416.docx))

4/22/2025 House Introduced, adopted, returned with concurrence ([House Journal‑page 58](h:\hj\20250422.docx))

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/16/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/570_20250416.docx)

A concurrent RESOLUTION

to RECOGNIZE AND HONOR SERGEANTS HUNTER RUFF, DANIEL MCCOWN, AND STEPHEN EARWOOD OF THE ANDERSON COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM ON BEING AWARDED THE SOUTH CAROLINA SHERIFFS’ ASSOCIATION 2024 MEDAL OF VALOR.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are pleased to learn that Sergeants Hunter Ruff, Daniel McCown, and Stephen Earwood of the Anderson County Sheriff’s Office were awarded the South Carolina Sheriffs’ Association 2024 Medal of Valor on April 23, 2025, for courageously taking swift and decisive action in the face of extreme danger, thus saving a child’s life; and

Whereas, the award is presented annually to law enforcement officers who perform actions above and beyond the call of duty; exhibit exceptional courage, extraordinary decisiveness, and presence of mind; or act with unusual swiftness, regardless of personal safety, in an attempt to save or protect human life; and

Whereas, on May 8, 2024, deputies from the Special Investigations Division assisted in the attempted apprehension of Joshua Dornellas, who had kidnapped his son, Bennett Dornellas, earlier that same day. Deputies located Joshua and followed him along Interstate 85 into Georgia, where Georgia law enforcement initiated a pursuit. During the chase, Joshua set his vehicle on fire and abandoned it while it was still in motion, leaving Bennett trapped inside. The burning truck veered off the roadway, up an embankment, and into the woods, where it quickly became fully engulfed in flames; and

Whereas, upon arrival at the scene, law enforcement officers made immediate attempts to extinguish the fire. Demonstrating extraordinary bravery, Sergeant Ruff entered the burning vehicle through the driver’s window and located Bennett on the driver’s side floorboard. Unable to exit while holding the child, he was assisted by Sergeant Earwood, who pulled him and Bennett from the vehicle. Bennett had sustained severe burns, and Sergeant McCown immediately began administering critical first aid. With EMS still en route, the decision was made to transport Bennett to medical personnel without delay. Sergeant Earwood carried Bennett to a law enforcement vehicle, where Sergeant McCown continued providing emergency care while Sergeant Ruff drove them to meet LifeFlight on Interstate 85. According to flight medics and doctors, Bennett would not have survived without their swift, decisive, and heroic actions; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly appreciate the courage and dedication of law enforcement officers like Sergeants Hunter Ruff, Daniel McCown, and Stephen Earwood who put their lives on the line every day and who provide safety and security to protect the citizens of our great State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor Sergeants Hunter Ruff, Daniel McCown, and Stephen Earwood of the Anderson County Sheriff’s Office and congratulate them on being awarded the South Carolina Sheriffs’ Association 2024 Medal of Valor.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Sergeants Hunter Ruff, Daniel McCown, and Stephen Earwood.

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