**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR SENATOR ROBERT FORD OF CHARLESTON COUNTY, UPON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND TO EXPRESS PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO HIM FOR HIS MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE DURING THAT STRUGGLE AND FOR HIS CONTINUED EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT RACIAL HEALING.

Whereas, it is only fitting that the members of the South Carolina General Assembly pause in their deliberations to commend their colleague, Senator Robert Ford, representing District 42, for his consistent devotion to the struggle for civil rights; and

Whereas, born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on December 26, 1948, Robert Ford attended Grambling State University in Grambling, Louisiana, on an athletic scholarship and Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan; and

Whereas, he began a career as a civil rights activist at the age of thirteen, serving as a student leader in the New Orleans branch of the NAACP; and

Whereas, as a teenager, he traveled to Alabama where he worked on voter registration with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and he worked for the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the SCLC, under the guidance of the late Reverends James E. Orange and James L. Bevel, both aides to Dr. King; and

Whereas, he helped to organize the Louisiana Caravan to Washington, D.C., for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963 and attended the event where Dr. King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech; and

Whereas, having traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to support striking sanitation workers as part of an SCLC advance team for Dr. King’s Poor People’s Campaign, nineteen‑year‑old Ford was in Memphis, on the fateful day of April 4, 1968, when Dr. King was assassinated; and

Whereas, as a result of his work in civil and human rights, young Robert Ford, was arrested seventy‑three times in seventeen states between 1962 and 1973; and

Whereas, six years after the death of Dr. King, Robert Ford’s efforts prompted the United States Justice Department to bar Charleston from annexing, an effort to dilute black voting strength, which led to the election of six black Charleston City Council members, including Robert Ford. He served there from 1974 until 1992 and has served in South Carolina’s Senate since 1993; and

Whereas, to mark the struggles and the successes of the past fifty years and to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement, seven cities will launch a series of events to focus on the stories of individuals for the benefit of a new generation. The cities organizing and collaborating on the events include Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; Memphis, Tennessee; Columbia, South Carolina; and Washington, D. C.; and

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina are grateful for the outstanding efforts of Senator Robert Ford in the struggle for racial equality and civil rights, spanning more than a half century. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, recognize and honor Senator Robert Ford of Charleston County, upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement, and express profound gratitude to him for his more than fifty years of dedicated service during that struggle and for his continued efforts to bring about racial healing.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Senator Robert Ford.

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