**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR THE VICTIMS OF AGENT ORANGE DURING THE VIETNAM WAR AND EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR THEIR COURAGEOUS SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY AS SOME OF AMERICA’S MOST HEROIC CITIZENS.

Whereas, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Palmetto State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

Whereas, the citizens of the United States have, throughout the years, been called upon to take up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all Americans and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

Whereas, more than eight million citizens of this country honorably served during the Vietnam War, during which time Agent Orange was widely used in Vietnam by the United States Armed Forces as part of the herbicidal warfare program Operation Ranch Hand from 1961 until 1971; and

Whereas, nearly twenty million gallons of the orange powder were sprayed over the land from helicopters or low‑flying aircraft, destroying vegetation and crops in order to deprive enemy guerrillas of food and cover for their activities and exposing 2.6 million American soldiers to the herbicide and defoliant chemical; and

Whereas, Agent Orange is a dioxin and cancer‑causing chemical that enters the body through physical contact or ingestion and moves into the human cell nucleus, where it attacks the genes and causes a number of serious illnesses, including leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, ischemic heart disease, soft‑tissue sarcoma, amyloidosis, and diabetes, as well as cancers of the throat, prostate, lung, and colon; and

Whereas, Agent Orange also causes genetic damage, and in some cases the children and grandchildren of veterans exposed to Agent Orange have been born with spina bifida and other abnormalities; and

Whereas, today, only eight hundred thousand Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange survive, and approximately three hundred deaths occur among them every day; and

Whereas, while their fallen comrades are memorialized on the wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., those veterans who are victims of Agent Orange are not recognized as fatalities of the Vietnam War; and

Whereas, it is most appropriate that we honor these veterans to the full extent of our ability, as they have made untold and innumerable sacrifices to preserve the liberties we enjoy today, liberties we pray our progeny will continue to cherish for generations to come. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, honor the victims of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War and express gratitude for their courageous service to our country as some of America’s most heroic citizens.

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