

Senate Resolution 983

By: Senator Kemp of the 3rd

#### A RESOLUTION

1 Congratulating the Midway Church and Society and the residents of Midway; and for other  
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, in 1633, a group of Puritans from England settled in the area that is now  
4 Dorchester, Massachusetts, and Windsor, Connecticut, a number of whom subsequently  
5 moved to Dorchester, South Carolina, and, as land for farming rice became scarce, the  
6 congregation looked for suitable lands elsewhere and selected what is now Midway, Georgia;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, a grant of land was obtained and, in 1754, most of the congregation moved to  
9 the Midway area, where they immediately established a society, through Articles of  
10 Incorporation, and built a church; and

11 WHEREAS, the religious denomination of the Puritans and subsequently the Midway settlers  
12 was known as Congregationalism, which teaches the values of independence, education, and  
13 industriousness; and

14 WHEREAS, Congregationalism's influence on the American colonists in their decision to  
15 declare their independence from England is well documented in writings of the day, and  
16 these tenets that led to the Congregationalists' persecution in England were also influential  
17 in the creation of American culture; and

18 WHEREAS, it is no accident that among the American colonists the most forward and  
19 outspoken for revolution were located in New England, where the Congregational church and  
20 Puritans had the greatest influence, and it is also no accident that their cousins, who had  
21 moved south long ago, were the most outspoken in their respective regions for the cause of  
22 liberty; and

1 WHEREAS, during the early days of the American Revolution, the colony of Georgia was  
2 hesitant to join its fellow colonists in revolt, but the residents of Midway, however, were not  
3 hesitant, and they elected their own representatives to attend the second Continental  
4 Congress; Dr. Lyman Hall was sent north with 60 barrels of rice and 50 pounds sterling to  
5 alleviate the suffering of the residents of Boston, and the zeal of the residents of Midway led  
6 James Wright, Royal Governor of Georgia at the time, to call them "These meddlesome  
7 Puritans at Midway"; and

8 WHEREAS, the rest of Georgia later decided to send representatives to the Congress, and  
9 Midway residents were prominent in the delegation; and

10 WHEREAS, two of Georgia's three signers of the Declaration of Independence, Button  
11 Gwinnett and Lyman Hall, were Midway residents and affiliated with the church; and

12 WHEREAS, in 1789, Midway militia skirmished with British regulars, halting their advance  
13 toward Savannah just a little more than a mile from the church, and the British retreated, but  
14 not before they burned the church and many of the homes in the area; and

15 WHEREAS, the Georgia Constitution of 1777 combined the parishes of St. John and St.  
16 Philip into a county named Liberty, "in honor of the early and conspicuous devotion of the  
17 people of St. John's to the cause of freedom, in so emphatically asserting their  
18 independence"; and

19 WHEREAS, it is a testament to their devotion to the value of education, independence, and  
20 hard work that a congregation that at no time numbered more than 200 people produced two  
21 signers of the Declaration of Independence; four governors of Georgia (and at least one  
22 other: Governor Jim Martin of North Carolina is a Midway descendant); the first United  
23 States Ambassador to China; numerous Congressmen and Senators; the namesakes of at least  
24 five Georgia counties; the mother of President Theodore Roosevelt; and John and Joseph  
25 LeConte, noted scientists, educators, and founders of the University of California at  
26 Berkeley; and, in addition, Oliver Wendell Holmes, author and Supreme Court Justice, and  
27 Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph, were both sons of ministers of the Midway Church;  
28 and

29 WHEREAS, the seeds which were sown by the loving and humble efforts of those initial  
30 devout worshipers have blossomed into a landmark institution which will celebrate its 250th  
31 anniversary; and

1 WHEREAS, the congregation of this church has compiled an unparalleled record of  
2 constructive, compassionate, and humanitarian service which it demonstrates daily through  
3 open minds, open hearts, and open doors; and

4 WHEREAS, the unmatched spiritual assistance offered by this church is a source of strength,  
5 inspiration, and direction for persons of all walks of life and from all economic strata; and

6 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this enduring example of God's message  
7 of peace and love be recognized for its innumerable good works rendered on behalf of  
8 persons in need.

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body  
10 congratulate the Midway Church and Society on the occasion of its 250th anniversary,  
11 commend the members of the congregation for the many, many decades of steadfast,  
12 unselfish, and loving service to the people of this state, and extend to the congregation their  
13 best wishes for continued growth and service to the community.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed  
15 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Midway Church and Society.