

## Senate Resolution 472

By: Senator Meyer von Bremen of the 12th

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Albany State University President Dr. Portia Holmes Shields;  
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Portia Holmes Shields was named Albany State University's first female  
4 president in 1996, when she joined the institution from Howard University where she held  
5 the position of Dean of the School of Education and a number of faculty and administrative  
6 posts; and

7 WHEREAS, as the seventh president of the 101-year-old university, Dr. Shields inherited  
8 a campus recovering from the destructive flood waters of the Flint River, which had  
9 consumed nearly two-thirds of the 204-acre campus in 1994; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Shields spearheaded the highly successful \$153 million rebuilding program  
11 that revitalized this southwest Georgia institution; and

12 WHEREAS, during her eight-year tenure, Albany State University has grown from a student  
13 body of approximately 3,100 to its present enrollment of 3,700 students and, thanks in large  
14 part to her educational outreach initiatives and her "Students First" approach, has attracted  
15 more presidential scholars and honor students than at any other time in the school's history  
16 and has enjoyed the third highest retention rate among the University System of Georgia's  
17 34 colleges and universities; and

18 WHEREAS, two new degree programs have received their initial accreditation under her  
19 administration, including the bachelor's degree in social work and the master's in public  
20 administration, which was accredited on its first attempt; and

21 WHEREAS, current and upcoming construction projects, such as the federally funded \$1  
22 million Early Learning Center, the \$33 million public-private dormitory project, the \$23.4  
23 million Ray Charles Fine Arts Building, and the recently completed \$7 million athletic

1 stadium, home to Albany State's nationally ranked NCAA Division II football team, will  
2 continue to keep the university on the cutting edge of higher education for years to come; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Shields is widely recognized as the university's greatest champion and  
4 ambassador, securing an unprecedented \$3 million donation from performing artist and  
5 Georgia native Ray Charles in 2002 and procuring more than \$25 million in external grants  
6 and funds in the following academic year; and

7 WHEREAS, her extraordinary efforts and achievements have brought great honor and  
8 recognition to the university, including its unconditional reaffirmation from the Southern  
9 Association of Colleges and Schools, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher  
10 Education, and the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs, a reflection  
11 of the quality education received by Albany State's high caliber student population; and

12 WHEREAS, the strength of the State of Georgia rests on the quality of higher education  
13 received by its young citizens, and Albany State University is recognized as a leading  
14 institution in the University System of Georgia; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Shields has left a valuable and lasting mark on this distinguished university.

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body  
17 join in recognizing Dr. Portia Holmes Shields, commending her eight outstanding years of  
18 dedicated service to the faculty, staff, and students of Albany State University, and extending  
19 their sincere best wishes for her continued success and happiness.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed  
21 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Dr. Portia Holmes Shields.