

House Resolution 1283

By: Representative Bryant of the 160th

A RESOLUTION

1 Commending the Honorable Viola W. Bell; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, the Honorable Viola W. Bell is a remarkable woman and a natural leader with
3 a caring heart, a guided spirit, a keen intellect, and an unparalleled inner strength; and

4 WHEREAS, in 1985 Viola Bell became the first black person in Garden City elected to serve
5 on the city council; in that year, she shared the role of freshman councilmember with only
6 one other, her comrade in arms and bicycling partner, the Honorable Sonny Dixon; and

7 WHEREAS, as a freshman councilmember, one of Mrs. Bell's first fights involved public
8 transportation; knowing that bus service is crucial to poorer citizens, Mrs. Bell, along with
9 Sonny Dixon and community leader Bob Bryant, fought tooth and nail, using the full extent
10 of her formidable charm and persuasive powers to creatively construct a way to retain bus
11 service into Garden City where it was most needed; and

12 WHEREAS, during her first two terms and thereafter, Mrs. Bell, along with her esteemed
13 colleague and good friend, Representative Dixon, championed many worthy causes,
14 including infrastructure improvements, senior citizens programs that for the first time
15 reached across racial lines, and many other public projects; and

16 WHEREAS, in 1989, Mrs. Bell received a mandate from the people of Garden City as she
17 was reelected with the highest vote of any councilmember, meaning that she became mayor
18 pro tem; it was another first for a black woman; and

19 WHEREAS, in 1992, Mrs. Bell arranged for Councilman Gwyn Hall to be elected to the
20 Garden City Council; and

21 WHEREAS, in a city that was over 70 percent white in 1989, her landslide only began to
22 show how widely her message continues to speak to people of all races; and

1 WHEREAS, Mrs. Bell retired from the Garden City Council in 1995, the same year she
2 ceased her nine years of service to the GMA Community and Human Development Policy
3 Committee and to the GMA Women in Municipal Government Committee; while serving
4 with the GMA, Mrs. Bell acted as 1st District president for 1992 and 1993; and

5 WHEREAS, in 1995, Mrs. Bell encouraged Representative Bob Bryant to seek a position on
6 the Garden City Council; the rest of that story is history; and

7 WHEREAS, as her record indicates, Mrs. Bell is the dictionary definition of community
8 service: she has willingly and selflessly given countless years of her time, energy, talent, and
9 unflinching good humor to everyone and every cause imaginable; and

10 WHEREAS, she has been a tireless advocate of family and community involvement: she is
11 very active in the PTA, having been president of numerous parent-teacher associations, she
12 was runner up as "Mother of the Year," and she volunteered for the March of Dimes, directed
13 church choirs, taught upholstery, and participated in numerous other worthy charitable
14 activities; and

15 WHEREAS, Viola Bell raised five wonderful children, and despite her share of burdens in
16 her life, she has handled all that has come her way with grace and dignity; and

17 WHEREAS, it is only fitting and proper that Viola Bell be recognized for her outstanding
18 good works; the people of her community would not be nearly as blessed in their lives were
19 it not for her efforts.

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
21 the members of this body do gratefully commend the Honorable Viola W. Bell and thank her
22 on behalf of the citizens of Garden City, Coastal Georgia, and the entire great State of
23 Georgia for all the hard work and dedication she has shown to her community.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
25 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Honorable Viola W.
26 Bell.