

Senate Resolution 1041

By: Senator Pearson of the 51st

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending those involved in the death investigation of Meredith Hope
2 Emerson; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, on or about January 1, 2008, the citizens of the State of Georgia and the nation
4 came to know Meredith Hope Emerson and the efforts that were made by several law
5 enforcement agencies, government entities, and numerous volunteers in an attempt to locate
6 her; and

7 WHEREAS, shortly after Ms. Emerson's disappearance, it became apparent to law
8 enforcement that Ms. Emerson had become the victim of an abduction, and as a result, a
9 multijurisdictional law enforcement effort began, coordinated by a command post established
10 within Vogel State Park; and

11 WHEREAS, through the outstanding assistance of citizens in providing key information as
12 a result of widespread media coverage and the dedicated professionals who worked tirelessly
13 throughout the investigation, Gary Michael Hilton was identified as a suspect in the
14 disappearance of Ms. Emerson; and

15 WHEREAS, on Friday, January 4, 2008, as a result of a unified effort by both citizens and
16 law enforcement, Gary Michael Hilton was apprehended in DeKalb County, Georgia, as he
17 was attempting to dispose of evidence; and

18 WHEREAS, on Monday, January 7, 2008, after several days of an intense search and the
19 culmination of hundreds of investigative man-hours, Gary Michael Hilton revealed to agents
20 of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation the location of Ms. Emerson's body; and

21 WHEREAS, as a result of negotiations between Gary Michael Hilton's attorneys Rob McNeil
22 and Brad Morris, District Attorney Stan Gunter of the Enotah Judicial Circuit, and District

1 Attorney Lee Darragh of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, Gary Michael Hilton pleaded
2 guilty on January 31, 2008, to the murder of Meredith Hope Emerson; and

3 WHEREAS, it is unprecedented, that in approximately 30 days, from the date of the
4 abduction of Ms. Emerson to the date of arrest and subsequent plea agreement, a criminal
5 investigation of this magnitude was resolved so quickly and effectively; and

6 WHEREAS, the exemplary efforts, outstanding professionalism, and dedication to duty of
7 the following agencies and organizations made this extraordinary resolution possible: the
8 Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Union County Sheriff's Office, Georgia Department of
9 Natural Resources, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Dawson
10 County Sheriff's Office, Union County Emergency Management Agency, Union County Fire
11 Department, Union County Road Department, Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office, Gwinnett
12 County Sheriff's Office, White County Sheriff's Office, Forsyth County Sheriff's Office,
13 Pickens County Sheriff's Office, Towns County Sheriff's Office, Fannin County Fire
14 Department, Atlanta Fire Department, Gwinnett County Fire Department, Civil Air Patrol,
15 United States Forest Service, DeKalb County Police Department, DeKalb County Fire
16 Department, Dawson County Fire Department, Henry County Fire Department, Lumpkin
17 County Fire Department, Towns County Fire Department, Forest Park Fire Department,
18 Rabun County Fire and Rescue, Gilder County Emergency Management Agency, Hall
19 County Emergency Management Agency, Forsyth County Emergency Management Agency,
20 Georgia State Defense Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation, District Attorney's Office of
21 the Enotah Judicial Circuit, District Attorney's Office of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit,
22 the Public Defender's Office for the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, the Public Defender's
23 Office for the Enotah Judicial Circuit, and the many other local agencies and numerous
24 volunteers who were involved in this effort; and

25 WHEREAS, the efforts of Ms. Peggy Bailey of Athens are also recognized and applauded
26 in that she not only served as spokesperson for the Emerson family during this trying time,
27 but also played a critical role as the family liaison with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation
28 Special Agents and the Union County Sheriff's Office on developments in the investigation.

29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
30 are proud to recognize the men and women of the law enforcement community, the many
31 government agencies, and volunteers who helped bring this tragic case to a swift conclusion,
32 and it is our sincere hope that such a quick resolution to the investigation has provided some
33 small comfort to the family of Meredith Hope Emerson.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
2 to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the
3 Union County Sheriff's Office, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Vogel
4 State Park, the Dawson County Sheriff's Office, the Georgia Emergency Management
5 Agency, the other agencies set forth above, Ms. Peggy Bailey, and the family of Meredith
6 Hope Emerson.