

Senate Resolution 505

By: Senator Butterworth of the 50th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the Habersham Board of Education on the dedication of the Hilliard A.
2 Wilbanks Middle School and honoring the life of Hilliard Almond Wilbanks of the United
3 States Air Force; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, February 24 marks the date in 1967 when Captain Hilliard Almond Wilbanks
5 gave his life in the service of his country as a captain with the United States Air Force; and

6 WHEREAS, as a forward air controller, Captain Wilbanks was the pilot of an unarmed light
7 aircraft flying visual reconnaissance ahead of a South Vietnam Army Ranger Battalion when
8 his intensive search revealed a well-concealed and numerically superior hostile force poised
9 to ambush the advancing rangers; and

10 WHEREAS, the Viet Cong, realizing that Captain Wilbanks's discovery had compromised
11 their position and ability to launch a surprise attack, immediately fired on the small aircraft
12 with all available firepower; and

13 WHEREAS, as the enemy advanced against the ranger force, Captain Wilbanks recognized
14 that close support aircraft could not arrive in time to enable the rangers to withstand the
15 advancing enemy; and

16 WHEREAS, with full knowledge of the limitations of his unarmed, unarmored, light
17 reconnaissance aircraft, and the great danger imposed by the enemy's vast firepower, Captain
18 Wilbanks flew through a hail of withering fire at treetop level, directly over the advancing
19 enemy, and inflicted many casualties by firing his rifle out of the side window of his aircraft;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, despite increasingly intense antiaircraft fire, Captain Wilbanks disregarded his
22 own safety and made repeated low passes over the enemy advance, allowing the rangers to
23 withdraw to safety from their perilous position; and

24 WHEREAS, during his final courageous attack to protect the withdrawing forces, Captain
25 Wilbanks was mortally wounded and his bullet-riddled aircraft crashed between the opposing
26 forces; and

27 WHEREAS, Captain Wilbanks's magnificent action saved numerous friendly personnel from
28 certain injury or death and on January 28, 1968, Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown
29 presented the Medal of Honor to Captain Wilbanks's widow; and

30 WHEREAS, Captain Wilbanks's unparalleled concern for his fellow man and his
31 extraordinary heroism were in the highest traditions of the military service, and to have a
32 school named in his honor is a most fitting tribute to his selfless service to this nation.

33 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
34 commend the Habersham Board of Education for the dedication of the Hilliard A. Wilbanks
35 Middle School to honor the life of Captain Hilliard Almond Wilbanks.

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
37 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Robert Costley, Superintendent of
38 Habersham County Schools.