

Senate Resolution 347

By: Senators Mullis of the 53rd, Shafer of the 48th, Chance of the 16th, Henson of the 41st, Staton of the 18th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Mr. John G. R. Bankhead, the GBI's Director of Public
2 Affairs, based upon his contributions to the law enforcement profession in Georgia; and for
3 other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead has been employed by the GBI since December, 1987, and was
5 the first full-time Public Affairs Officer in the history of the agency; prior to the GBI, Mr.
6 Bankhead graduated from Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, with a degree in
7 business administration and was also a First Lieutenant in the Military Police for the U.S.
8 Army; and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead is the longest serving public affairs officer in Georgia state
10 government and is well known among the media in Georgia for his professionalism and
11 knowledge of the media and of GBI and law enforcement procedures; his institutional insight
12 allows him to effectively communicate, in a timely manner, issues that are of interest to the
13 media and informative to the general public; and

14 WHEREAS, in his role as Director of Public Affairs, Mr. Bankhead interacts on a regular
15 basis with the public and the news media, and he serves as a legislative liaison for the GBI
16 at the Georgia General Assembly and the Governor's staff; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead is a true team player, relieving the agent of the burden of
18 handling the media during breaking investigations so agents and investigators can perform
19 their duties in a timely fashion; during major investigations, Mr. Bankhead has worked
20 closely with GBI agents, and the agency's command staff, collecting information and
21 providing appropriate responses to media inquiries; and

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead's credibility with both the media and the members of the public
23 is beyond reproach; he is highly respected for his honesty and professionalism and is often
24 asked to coordinate media responses for other agencies and city and state government

25 officials, often becoming the public state-wide and national face for the GBI, and other
26 Georgia law enforcement, in his role as the public spokesperson for the involved agencies;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead regularly assists other law enforcement agencies by mentoring
29 and assisting in the training of new public affairs employees from those agencies and has also
30 assisted law enforcement organizations such as the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police
31 with drafting press releases related to significant events and programs; and

32 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead has an excellent intuition when it comes to knowing and
33 understanding what the storyline will be concerning active and often intense investigative
34 events; he knows how to communicate issues to the media while respecting the privacy of
35 victims and their families and protecting the integrity of ongoing and developing criminal
36 investigations; and

37 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead has also provided training and instruction to GBI as well as local,
38 other state, and federal agency personnel on media relations and how to manage media
39 requests; since 2004, Mr. Bankhead has on numerous occasions been a guest instructor for
40 the University of Georgia's Department of Telecommunications at the Grady College of
41 Journalism and Mass Communication, where he spoke on the topic of law enforcement and
42 their media release policies; and

43 WHEREAS, since 1994, Mr. Bankhead has served as a legislative liaison for the GBI with
44 the Georgia General Assembly, extremely effectively representing the interests of the GBI
45 and the law enforcement community during the yearly legislative sessions; he handled
46 numerous legislative issues affecting the GBI during the past session and has often been
47 called upon by various legislators and legislative committees to provide information on
48 behalf of the GBI and the law enforcement community on topics related to proposed
49 legislation; and

50 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead has been instrumental in providing information on legislative
51 issues, resulting in the successful passage of several bills the GBI was involved in including
52 public safety reform, synthetic drugs, and sovereign citizens; other legislative matters Mr.
53 Bankhead has been involved in since 1994 include the DNA database of convicted felons,
54 expanding the DNA database at the GBI to include those convicted of certain felonies and
55 placed on probation, allowing the search of certain suspect's DNA through the database, the
56 sex offender registry, Mattie's Call, the banning of novelty licenses, and a law that provided

57 important tools to Georgia law enforcement in their efforts to protect Georgia's children
58 against Internet sex predators; and

59 WHEREAS, Mr. Bankhead has served the GBI, the Georgia law enforcement community,
60 and the people of Georgia in an exemplary manner.

61 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
62 recognize the accomplishments of Mr. John G. R. Bankhead and commend him for his
63 contributions to the GBI and the State of Georgia for over 25 years of loyal service.

64 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
65 to transmit and appropriate copy of this resolution to Mr. John G. R. Bankhead.