

## House Resolution 1470

By: Representatives Carter of the 92<sup>nd</sup>, Dukes of the 154<sup>th</sup>, Thomas of the 56<sup>th</sup>, Abrams of the 89<sup>th</sup>, Hugley of the 136<sup>th</sup>, and others

## A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing and commending Mr. Henry "Hank" Thomas; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, prone to rebellion from an early age, Mr. Henry "Hank" Thomas was a founding  
3 member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and joined the first Freedom  
4 Riders group in May, 1961; and
- 5 WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders challenged the racist status quo by riding interstate buses,  
6 going against customs that promoted segregated seating and provoked unwarranted violence  
7 from other riders, which gave further credibility to the Civil Rights Movement; and
- 8 WHEREAS, following the Vietnam War, where Mr. Thomas served as a medic and earned  
9 a Purple Heart, he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, to become an entrepreneur, opening a  
10 laundromat business and climbing the ladder by working in the franchise business, becoming  
11 the owner of several restaurants; and
- 12 WHEREAS, by 1991, he was a millionaire, and in 1992, he was honored at the Freedom  
13 Fighters Appreciation Banquet; and
- 14 WHEREAS, Mr. Thomas's passion for activism and civil rights has been consistent  
15 throughout his entire life, and he has served on the boards of the APEX Museum, the Butler  
16 Street YMCA, the Atlanta Youth Academy, and Atlanta's Boys and Girls Club; and
- 17 WHEREAS, he also served as the National Chair for the Mississippi Freedom Riders 50th  
18 Reunion Foundation; received the Buffalo Soldier award from Howard University in 2006;  
19 was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame, receiving the "For My  
20 People" award; and has been awarded the Rabbi Perry Nausbaum Civil Justice Award and  
21 the 365 Black Award from McDonald's Inc.; and

22 WHEREAS, after 30 years as a McDonald's owner of nine restaurants, he and his wife,  
23 Yvonne, recently sold the last McDonald's restaurant and retired; and

24 WHEREAS, currently, Mr. Thomas is on the Board of Trustees of Tougaloo College,  
25 Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Piney Woods School in Jackson, Mississippi, and  
26 is the owner of three Marriott Hotels; and

27 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the outstanding accomplishments of this  
28 remarkable and distinguished Georgian be appropriately recognized.

29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
30 the members of this body recognize and commend Mr. Henry "Hank" Thomas for his  
31 dedicated service to his community, this state, and the nation.

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
33 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Mr.  
34 Henry "Hank" Thomas.