

Senate Resolution 1258

By: Senator Fort of the 39th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Ralph David Abernathy III; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished citizens
3 with the passing of Ralph David Abernathy III on March 17, 2016; and
- 4 WHEREAS, he was born on March 19, 1959, a beloved son of world-renowned leaders
5 Reverend Dr. and Mrs. Ralph David Abernathy, Sr.; and
- 6 WHEREAS, fighting for freedom, justice, and equality, Mr. Abernathy was arrested on June
7 14, 1968, at the age of nine and without the presence of his parents; and
- 8 WHEREAS, in 1988, at the age of 29, he began an illustrious political career with his
9 successful election to the Georgia House of Representatives and was the youngest politician
10 ever elected to the state House of Representatives; and
- 11 WHEREAS, forging ahead in 1992, he was elected to the Georgia State Senate for the 38th
12 District; during his political career, Senator Abernathy led the efforts to change the
13 Confederate Georgia state flag, ensured that teachers received the national average salary
14 increase, and introduced legislation to ensure that minority-owned businesses could
15 participate on all state contracts; and
- 16 WHEREAS, through his vision and determined efforts, the Firearms Protection for Minors
17 Act was sponsored to protect children by requiring gun owners to keep their weapons out of
18 the reach of children; and
- 19 WHEREAS, following a successful ten-year political career, Dr. Abernathy accepted his
20 calling by God into the ministry and was ordained in 2001 at Atlanta's historic West Hunter
21 Street Baptist Church, the church where his father pastored for 30 years; and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Abernathy graduated from the continuing theological education program
23 at the Interdenominational Theological Center and received his master's and doctorate
24 degrees in theology from the North Carolina College of Theology; and

25 WHEREAS, he was united in love and marriage to his wife, Annette, and was blessed with
26 three children, Ralph David IV, Christiana, and Micah; and

27 WHEREAS, Mr. Abernathy will long be remembered for his community activism and his
28 unprecedented commitment to nonviolence and social justice, and he will be missed by all
29 who had the great fortune of knowing him.

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
31 join in honoring the life and memory of Ralph David Abernathy III and express their deepest
32 and most sincere regret at his passing.

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
34 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the family of
35 Ralph David Abernathy III.