

House Resolution 1897

By: Representatives Thomas of the 56th, Smyre of the 135th, Jones of the 53rd, McClain of the 100th, Beasley-Teague of the 65th, and others

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, Mr. Abernathy fought for freedom, justice, and equality and, as a result, was
- 5 arrested on June 14, 1968, at the age of nine and without the presence of his parents, yet he
- 6 braved the terrors of jail and incarceration and began a life of fighting injustice to help and
- 7 champion causes of black Americans and the less fortunate; 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 and sponsored Landmark Law, which required the race
- 14 classification of multiracial to be included on all school, employment, and state forms
- 15 requiring racial data in the State of Georgia; 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 adhered assiduously to his motto in life, "if the elevator to success is broken,
26 take the stairs"; and

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

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Abernathy will long be remembered for his unprecedented commitment to
30 nonviolence and social justice and will be missed by all who knew him.

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

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