

Senate Resolution 445

By: Senators Jackson of the 2nd, Anderson of the 43rd, Davenport of the 44th and Butler of the 55th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and honoring the 1963 Leesburg Stockade Women, heroes of the American
2 Civil Rights Movement; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, while struggling for justice and racial equality during the 1963 Civil Rights
4 Movement in Americus, Georgia, 14 young girls from the ages of ten to fifteen dared to
5 speak out, and, in response to their actions, these girls were illegally arrested and held captive
6 in an old Civil War era abandoned stockade, deep in the woods of Leesburg, Georgia; and

7 WHEREAS, these brave adolescent girls were unjustly imprisoned for two months in the cell
8 block of the Leesburg Stockade where they endured horrendous, inhumane conditions,
9 including little food, contaminated drinking water, no working toilet, no personal hygiene
10 or medical supplies, and sleeping on a cold cement floor without pillows or blankets; and

11 WHEREAS, during this nightmare, the parents of the captive girls had no knowledge of why
12 their daughters were being held hostage or where they were imprisoned, and for those
13 seemingly endless two months the girls' parents suffered the uncertainty of not knowing if
14 their beloved daughters were even still alive; and

15 WHEREAS, the names of these Civil Rights heroes are: Dr. Shirley Green-Reese, Willie
16 Mae Smith-Davis, Carol Barner-Seay, Melinda Jones-Williams, Verna Hollis, Billie Jo
17 Thornton-Allen, Diane Dorsey-Bowens, Lula Westbrook-Griffin, Laura Ruff-Saunders,
18 Pearl Brown (deceased), Mattie Crittenden (deceased), Sandra Russell-Mansfield (deceased),
19 Annie Lou Ragans-Laster (deceased), and Gloria Westbrook (deceased); and

20 WHEREAS, it is hoped that the memory of this atrocity will dissuade future generations
21 from performing such injustices and that one day inhumane treatment like this will be
22 eradicated worldwide; and

23 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper to recognize the struggles of the 1963
24 Leesburg Stockade Women, as their history reminds us all how the fight for freedom is won
25 by the strength of even the smallest of souls and justice may be guarded even by the will of
26 a child.

27 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
28 recognize the 1963 Leesburg Stockade Women and extend their most sincere best wishes to
29 these precious Civil Rights heroes and their proud family members.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
31 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to each of the 14
32 women of the 1963 Leesburg Stockade Women or their surviving family members.