

## House Resolution 499

By: Representatives Smyre of the 135<sup>th</sup>, Ralston of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Martin of the 49<sup>th</sup>, Jones of the 47<sup>th</sup>, Oliver of the 82<sup>nd</sup>, and others

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and congratulating Dr. Steve W. Wrigley upon his retirement as chancellor of  
2 the University System of Georgia; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Steve W. Wrigley has served the State of Georgia in extraordinary ways,  
4 developing broad and deep expertise in both government and higher education; and

5 WHEREAS, his passion for public service began with more than a decade of experience in  
6 state government, including two years as a senior policy adviser and five years as Georgia  
7 Governor Zell Miller's chief of staff, during which time he was instrumental in implementing  
8 Georgia's groundbreaking pre-kindergarten program as well as the HOPE scholarship, which  
9 has helped more than 1.8 million Georgia students obtain a higher education; and

10 WHEREAS, he helped guide Governor Miller's efforts to improve all levels of education in  
11 Georgia by making investments in technology, buildings, and human resources; as a result,  
12 Georgia became known as a national leader for innovative programs and teachers' salaries  
13 rose to near the top for the region; and

14 WHEREAS, he joined the University of Georgia in 1998, beginning a long and distinguished  
15 career in higher education that included serving as the university's senior vice president for

16 external affairs as well as vice president for government relations and director of the Carl  
17 Vinson Institute of Government before becoming executive vice chancellor for  
18 administration for the University System of Georgia until his appointment as chancellor; and

19 WHEREAS, Dr. Steve W. Wrigley has served as chancellor of the University System of  
20 Georgia for more than four years, during which time the University System of Georgia has  
21 won the Exceptional Agency Award from the State Higher Education Executive Officers  
22 Association for excellent leadership, academic innovation, and rise in student achievement;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, under his leadership, the University System of Georgia experienced record  
25 enrollment, having reached an all-time high of 341,485 students in Fall 2020; and

26 WHEREAS, despite unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the University  
27 System of Georgia was awarded a record 70,879 degrees in Fiscal Year 2020—the most in  
28 system history; and

29 WHEREAS, as part of his commitment to degree attainment, efficiency, and affordability  
30 for Georgia students and their families, undergraduate tuition and fees for the University  
31 System of Georgia have been among the lowest of the 16 states in the Southern Regional  
32 Education Board, with annual tuition increases over the last five years averaging 0.9 percent  
33 and no tuition increases in three of the last five years, including for the current academic  
34 year; and

35 WHEREAS, by his leadership, the University System of Georgia has led the nation in  
36 innovative approaches to public higher education by reducing administrative costs,  
37 improving services, and increasing student success; and

38 WHEREAS, a nationally-cited consolidation initiative redirected \$30 million in  
39 administrative savings toward instruction and student support while increasing retention and  
40 graduation rates, and the University System of Georgia redirected an additional \$113 million  
41 toward student success efforts through a comprehensive review of administrative functions  
42 across the state; and

43 WHEREAS, the University System of Georgia pioneered the use of free or low-cost  
44 textbooks and other online educational resources, saving students \$27 million in Spring 2020  
45 alone; and

46 WHEREAS, during his tenure, the groundbreaking initiative called the Momentum Year  
47 helped Georgia maintain its position as a national leader in higher education, using proactive  
48 and data-driven techniques to help students in their crucial first year of college stay on track  
49 toward successful degree completion and on-time graduation; and

50 WHEREAS, the University System of Georgia experienced an almost ten percentage point  
51 increase in four-year graduation rates and saw among the largest increases in the nation over  
52 the last five years for six-year college completion rates, according to the National Student  
53 Clearinghouse Research Center; and

54 WHEREAS, he has been named to Georgia Trend's list of "100 Most Influential Georgians"  
55 for each of the past three years and received the 2019 J.W. Fanning Award from Leadership  
56 Georgia for his contributions toward progressive leadership and service on behalf of the  
57 state; and

58 WHEREAS, he is a first-generation college student and graduate of Georgia State University,  
59 and his parents taught him the value of hard work, emphasized the importance of being  
60 honest, and encouraged him to pursue education.

61 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
62 the members of this body recognize Dr. Steve W. Wrigley for his many years of dedicated  
63 public service to the University System of Georgia, his community, this state, and this nation;  
64 congratulate him upon the occasion of his retirement as chancellor; and extend to him their  
65 most sincere best wishes for continued success, health, and happiness.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
67 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Dr.  
68 Steve W. Wrigley.