

House Resolution 1122

By: Representatives Jackson of the 68th, Schofield of the 63rd, Scott of the 76th, Davis of the 87th, and Mitchell of the 88th

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the victims of the Thiokol Chemical Corporation explosion of 1971; and for
2 other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, on February 3, 1971, at approximately 10:53 a.m., the ground trembled in the
4 City of Woodbine, Georgia, and across the Southeast as a catastrophic fiery explosion
5 engulfed Building M-132 at the Thiokol Chemical Corporation plant; and

6 WHEREAS, the force of the blast was felt as far away as Jacksonville, Florida, and
7 Brunswick, Georgia, marking one of the worst industrial disasters in the history of the United
8 States, alongside the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and the West Fertilizer Plant explosion;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, this tragedy claimed the lives of 29 dedicated workers—a majority of whom
11 were Black women—and left at least 50 others with life-altering injuries, leaving a legacy of
12 trauma that haunted survivors and the Woodbine community for decades; and

13 WHEREAS, these workers were more than employees; they were patriots and providers who
14 sought these roles to lift their families out of poverty during an era when domestic and
15 agricultural jobs were the only other options available to them; and

16 WHEREAS, the aftermath of this disaster catalyzed pivotal changes in American law and
17 safety, including the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
18 just months later to ensure safe working conditions for all Americans; and

19 WHEREAS, the legal battle following the explosion lasted 17 years and led to significant
20 advancements in tort reform, which ultimately provided the legal framework used to
21 compensate victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks; and

22 WHEREAS, the tragedy transformed emergency response forever, triggering the transition
23 from private ambulance services to the modern Fire-EMS systems we rely on today; and

24 WHEREAS, it is only fitting and proper that the State of Georgia honors the memory of
25 those who perished and acknowledges the profound impact their sacrifice had on the safety
26 and justice systems of our nation.

27 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
28 the members of this body join in memorializing the victims of the Thiokol chemical
29 explosion and express their deepest sympathy to the families and the Woodbine community.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following individuals are hereby remembered for
31 their service and sacrifice: Gertrude Anderson, Mary Alice Baker, Emma Lou Barton, Kathy
32 Marie Barton, Peggy Barton, Clementine Benett, Pauline S. Benson, Annie Ruth Booth,
33 Yvonne D. Booth, Ethel L. Brown, Lacy C. Brown, Mable L. Brown, Marie H. Brown,
34 Altamease S. Coakley, Irene W. Free, Ethelyne B. Gathers, Hester L. Gathers, Catherine G.
35 Graham, Ida May Hall, Thelma Hammon, Mamie L. Kemp, Celia S. Miller, Elizabeth
36 Moore, Annie Bell Nelson, Gladys V. Nelson, Cena Mae S. Sheffield, Thelma G. Sifford,
37 Sallie G. Thompson, and Leola S. Williams.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
39 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
40 Thiokol Memorial Museum, the public, and the press.