

House Resolution 1300 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Ford of the 170th, Cannon of the 172nd, Hatchett of the 155th, Jones of the 47th, Greene of the 154th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Dedicating certain portions of the state highway system; and for other purposes.

2 **PART I**

3 WHEREAS, the Honorable Penny Houston was raised in Leary, Georgia, and graduated
4 from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, and from the University of Georgia; and

5 WHEREAS, she was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1997 and tirelessly
6 represented the interests of her constituents in District 170 for nearly three decades; and

7 WHEREAS, Representative Houston served as chairperson of the Appropriations
8 Subcommittee on Economic Development and Tourism and on the Ways and Means, Banks
9 and Banking, Economic Development and Tourism, Budget and Fiscal Affairs Oversight,
10 and Appropriations committees and the House Rural Development Council; and

11 WHEREAS, a woman of deep and abiding faith, Representative Houston is an active
12 member of the Nashville United Methodist Church and is a board member of the Methodist
13 Home in Macon, Georgia; and

14 WHEREAS, her leadership and guidance have been instrumental for numerous
15 organizations, including the Nashville Woman's Club and the Berrien, Tift, and Cook County
16 chambers of commerce; and

17 WHEREAS, a lifelong advocate for children, Representative Houston has been involved with
18 the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes for more than 30 years, is a member emeritus of the
19 Georgia Sheriffs' Boys Ranch Board in Hahira, and serves on the advisory board of the
20 Atlanta Speech School; and

21 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
22 Georgian be appropriately recognized by dedicating a roundabout in her honor.

23

PART II

24 WHEREAS, Mr. John L. Williams has long been recognized by the citizens of this state for
25 the vital role that he played in leadership and his deep personal commitment to the welfare
26 of the citizens of Georgia; and

27 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams diligently and conscientiously devoted innumerable hours of his
28 time, talents, and energy toward the betterment of his community and state as evidenced
29 dramatically by his work as an entrepreneur in Cook County, Georgia; and

30 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams' significant organizational and leadership talents, his remarkable
31 patience and diplomacy, his keen sense of vision, and his sensitivity to the needs of the
32 citizens of this state earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues and associates;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, he was a person of magnanimous strengths with an unimpeachable reputation
35 for integrity, intelligence, fairness, and kindness; and

36 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
37 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating an interchange in his memory.

38 **PART III**

39 WHEREAS, Mr. John A. Williams was a visionary civic leader, philanthropist, and real
40 estate developer whose leadership and investment profoundly shaped the economic, cultural,
41 and infrastructure development of Cobb County, Fulton County, and the greater metropolitan
42 Atlanta region; and

43 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams played a pivotal role in transforming the Cumberland area into
44 one of Georgia's most significant employment and commercial centers, helping to establish
45 the Cumberland Community Improvement District, which has served as a model for
46 public-private cooperation and infrastructure investment throughout this state; and

47 WHEREAS, through his leadership and advocacy, Mr. Williams helped secure critical
48 funding for transportation and infrastructure improvements along the U.S. Route 41 corridor
49 and throughout the Cumberland area, strengthening connectivity between Cobb and Fulton
50 counties and enhancing regional mobility; and

51 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams was instrumental in the creation and success of landmark
52 developments that elevated the quality of life in Cobb County, including his generous
53 \$10 million philanthropic contribution to the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, a premier
54 cultural venue that has become a cornerstone of the region's arts and economic vitality; and

55 WHEREAS, he demonstrated a deep and abiding commitment to public service, historic
56 preservation, and community investment, including efforts to preserve treasured local assets
57 such as Glover Park in the City of Marietta, ensuring that growth was balanced with respect
58 for history and community character; and

59 WHEREAS, widely regarded as one of the most influential civic and business leaders in
60 metro Atlanta, Mr. Williams was known for his bipartisan leadership, forward-thinking
61 approach to urban planning, and dedication to strategic infrastructure development that
62 continues to benefit Georgia's citizens and economy; and

63 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
64 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating a bridge in his memory.

65 **PART IV**

66 WHEREAS, Ms. Cara Jaden Atkins was born on April 27, 2002, in Marietta, Georgia, the
67 beloved daughter of Perry and Christy Atkins; and

68 WHEREAS, an exceptional athlete, Ms. Atkins graduated from Etowah High School and
69 continued her education at Georgia Highlands College, where she excelled academically,
70 graduating with a perfect 4.0 grade point average, earning repeated spots on the Dean's List,
71 and was a member of the prestigious Phi Theta Kappa honor society; and

72 WHEREAS, she graduated from dental hygienist school and was eagerly pursuing her
73 bachelor's degree in science, driven by her passion for helping others achieve better health
74 and confidence; and

75 WHEREAS, Ms. Atkins spent her time giving back to local charities and causes that uplifted
76 others in need, including Jamie's Hope, the Cherokee Humane Society, and Locks of Love;
77 and

78 WHEREAS, she coached gymnastics to young children and touched the lives of many with
79 her smile that was like sunshine, instantly filling any room with warmth, joy, and positivity;
80 and

81 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this encouraging, kind, and selfless
82 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating an interchange in her memory.

83 **PART V**

84 WHEREAS, Mr. Andrew "Drew" Keith Slay was born on February 24, 1999, in Austell,
85 Georgia, the beloved son to Amanda and Jerry Slay; and

86 WHEREAS, Mr. Slay was a talented graphic designer and an accomplished art major at the
87 University of West Georgia when his life was tragically cut short in a traffic accident on
88 April 8, 2023; and

89 WHEREAS, known for his positive attitude, creativity, and willingness to support others,
90 Mr. Slay gave inspiration to many through his high ideals, morals, and deep concern for his
91 fellow citizens, and the devotion, patience, and understanding he demonstrated to his family
92 and friends were admired by others; and

93 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous man, Mr. Slay was deeply loved by all who
94 knew him, from professors to colleagues at the Farmer's Table, where his positive impact was
95 felt; and

96 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
97 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating a bridge in his memory.

98 **PART VI**

99 WHEREAS, Mr. William Brown Lovett was born on October 6, 1824, in Montgomery
100 County, Georgia, the eldest son of Joshua and Elizabeth Lovett; and

101 WHEREAS, he grew up on the family farm in Adel, Georgia, learning the trade from his
102 parents, spent his life in Lowndes County, Georgia, and later became known as one of the
103 leading farmers of Berrien County, where his talent and efficiency in growing corn was
104 widely recognized; and

105 WHEREAS, Mr. Lovett was united in love and marriage to his wife, Eliza, and was blessed
106 with eight children; and

107 WHEREAS, an advocate for education, Mr. Lovett had the Lovett School built on his land,
108 which eventually became known as the Pine Bloom School; and

109 WHEREAS, he was a person of magnanimous strengths with an unimpeachable reputation
110 for integrity, intelligence, fairness, and kindness; and

111 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
112 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating an interchange in his memory.

113 **PART VII**

114 WHEREAS, Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon was born on August 30, 1960, and grew up in
115 Lincoln, Maine, before joining the United States Army at the age of 18; and

116 WHEREAS, Master Sgt. Gordon was serving as sniper team leader for the United States
117 Army Special Operations Command with Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu, Somalia, when
118 his unit was subjected to intense enemy fire while attempting to rescue the crew of a downed
119 helicopter; and

120 WHEREAS, Master Sgt. Gordon volunteered to be inserted to protect four critically
121 wounded personnel, despite the risk to his own safety; and

122 WHEREAS, he and a fellow sniper fought through intense small arms fire and a maze of
123 shanties and shacks to reach the critically injured crew members; and

124 WHEREAS, after depleting his ammunition and losing his fellow sniper to enemy fire,
125 Master Sgt. Gordon recovered weapons and ammunition from the crashed helicopter and
126 elected to give the last five rounds of recovered ammunition to the pilot of the crashed
127 helicopter; and

128 WHEREAS, Master Sgt. Gordon gave the ultimate sacrifice for his fellow man and his
129 selflessness embodied the spirit of service; and

130 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
131 American be recognized appropriately by dedicating a road in his memory.

132 **PART VIII**

133 WHEREAS, Mrs. Edna Sirmans Sessoms was born on October 16, 1892, the beloved
134 daughter of State Senator Frank B. Sirmans and Amanda Strickland Sirmans, and passed
135 away on September 18, 1994; and

136 WHEREAS, Mrs. Sessoms grew up on her family's land in Sirmans, Georgia, near Camp
137 Creek Missionary Baptist Church; and

138 WHEREAS, on February 28, 1913, she married Alexander Kelly Sessoms and the couple
139 moved to Cogdell, Georgia, where they opened a large general store; and

140 WHEREAS, the Sessoms went on to become the largest landowners and operators of naval
141 stores in the entire State of Georgia; and

142 WHEREAS, after her husband's passing in 1944, Mrs. Sessoms continued to oversee the
143 family's timber holdings and business interests; and

144 WHEREAS, Mrs. Sessoms was involved in the early pioneering of the modern day forest
145 industry in south Georgia, ensuring that the family's sprawling acreage was improved,
146 contained as one functioning unit, and maintained as sustainable forests for more than five
147 generations; and

148 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
149 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating a bridge in her memory.

150 **PART IX**

151 WHEREAS, Zander Trayvon Whatley was born on May 11, 2012, the beloved son of
152 Shareeda Dorsey and Jermaine Whatley, and his life was tragically cut short on April 29,
153 2024, when he became an innocent bystander in a senseless act of violence within his own
154 home; and

155 WHEREAS, Zander was 11 years old and a vibrant fifth grade student at Hal Hutchens
156 Elementary School, where he proudly served on the student council; and

157 WHEREAS, a talented athlete and competitor, Zander excelled at soccer, baseball, and
158 football; and

159 WHEREAS, Zander had an infectious spirit that shined brightly through his love of the Lord
160 and was demonstrated through his weekly worship; and

161 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this remarkable and distinguished
162 Georgian be recognized appropriately by dedicating an intersection in his memory.

163 **PART X**

164 WHEREAS, Representative James A. "Bubber" Epps, Jr., has long been recognized by the
165 citizens of this state for the vital role that he plays in leadership in this state and his deep
166 personal commitment to the welfare of the citizens of Georgia; and

167 WHEREAS, Representative Epps served on the Twiggs County Board of Commissioners
168 from 1983 to 1992 and on the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center Board from
169 1989 to 1992; and

170 WHEREAS, he served as a member of the Georgia General Assembly from 2009 to 2019,
171 representing the citizens of House District 144, and served as chairman of the House
172 Committee on Motor Vehicles and House Committee on Small Business Development and
173 secretary of the House Committee on Transportation during his tenure; and

174 WHEREAS, in 2019, Representative Epps was appointed to the Middle Georgia Regional
175 Commission Council, where his leadership and guidance earned him the respect and
176 admiration of his colleagues and associates; and

177 WHEREAS, Representative Epps has been known for his collaborative approach, steady
178 leadership, consistent support of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council's staff
179 and mission, and his enduring commitment to public service, regional cooperation, and the
180 advancement of Middle Georgia communities through leadership in both the public and
181 private sectors; and

182 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the outstanding accomplishments of this
183 remarkable and distinguished Georgian be appropriately recognized by dedicating an
184 interchange in his honor.

185 **PART XI**

186 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ENACTED BY THE GENERAL
187 ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that the roundabout at State Route 76 and State Route 37 in
188 Cook County is dedicated as the Representative Penny Houston Roundabout.

189 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the interchange of State Route
190 401/Interstate 75 and State Route 37 in Cook County is dedicated as the John L. Williams
191 Memorial Interchange.

192 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the bridge on U.S. Route 41/State
193 Route 3 over the Chattahoochee River in Cobb County is dedicated as the John A. Williams
194 Memorial Bridge.

195 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the interchange of Interstate 75 and
196 State Route 92 in Cherokee County is dedicated as the Cara Jaden Atkins Memorial
197 Interchange.

198 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the bridge on State Route 8CO over
199 I-20 in Douglas County is dedicated as the Andrew "Drew" Keith Slay Memorial Bridge.

200 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the interchange of State Route
201 401/I-75 and Barneyville Road in Cook County is dedicated as the William Brown Lovett
202 Memorial Interchange.

203 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the portion of U.S. 78/U.S. 278/State
204 Route 10 from Willhaven Drive eastward to Belfair Lakes Drive in Augusta-Richmond
205 County is dedicated as the Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon Memorial Highway.

206 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the bridge on State Route 168 over
207 Camp Creek in Clinch County is dedicated as the Edna Sirmans Sessoms Memorial Bridge.

208 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the intersection of State Route 92 and
209 Sweetwater Church Road in Paulding County is dedicated as the Zander Trayvon Whatley
210 Memorial Intersection.

211 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED that the interchange of I-16 and State
212 Route 96 in Twiggs County is dedicated as the Representative Bubber Epps Interchange.

213 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation is authorized and
214 directed to erect and maintain appropriate signs dedicating the road facilities named in this
215 resolution.

216 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
217 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
218 Department of Transportation; to the Honorable Penny Houston and Representative James
219 A. "Bubber" Epps, Jr.; and to the families of Mr. John L. Williams, Mr. John A. Williams,
220 Ms. Cara Jaden Atkins, Mr. Andrew "Drew" Keith Slay, Mr. William Brown Lovett, Master
221 Sgt. Gary I. Gordon, Mrs. Edna Sirmans Sessoms, and Zander Trayvon Whatley.