

House Resolution 1711

By: Representatives McClain of the 109th, Williams of the 168th, Mitchell of the 88th, Glaize of the 67th, and Berry of the 56th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Reverend Fred C. Bennette, Jr.; 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 Civil Rights leader Reverend Fred C. Bennette, Jr.; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Reverend Bennette, was born on December 2, 1928, in Atlanta, Georgia, a
5 beloved son of Annie Mae McDowell Bennette and Columbus Bennette, Sr.; and
- 6 WHEREAS, he served as a guardian of this nation's freedom and liberty with the United
7 States Army, valiantly and courageously protecting his fellow Americans; and
- 8 WHEREAS, following his military service, Reverend Bennette attended Morris Brown
9 College and the Turner Theological Seminary at Morris Brown College; and
- 10 WHEREAS, in 1960, after meeting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and becoming close friends
11 with his brother, Reverend Bennette became a key figure in the Civil Rights Movement; and

12 WHEREAS, that year, he was a key organizer for the Southern Christian Leadership
13 Conference as well as a staff coordinator for the successful sit-in campaign to desegregate
14 Rich's Department Store; and

15 WHEREAS, from 1961 to 1964, Reverend Bennette served as the director of the All Citizens
16 Committee for Voter Registration and deputy director of the Georgia Voters League, paving
17 the way for a dramatic increase in Black registered voters; and

18 WHEREAS, during a 1961 Freedom Riders rally in Montgomery, Alabama, an unidentified
19 assailant threw a gas bomb at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which Reverend Bennette, without
20 hesitation, picked up and threw off to the side; and

21 WHEREAS, in 1964, Dr. King appointed Reverend Bennette as the first director of the
22 Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Operation Breadbasket, that mobilized selective
23 buying campaigns to pressure businesses to hire thousands of minorities; and

24 WHEREAS, Reverend Bennette was instrumental in the campaigns and advisory councils
25 of several prominent politicians in the State of Georgia, including President Jimmy Carter
26 and Atlanta Mayor and Congressman Andrew Young; and

27 WHEREAS, Reverend Bennette remained an active member of the Board of Advisors of the
28 Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change; served as The King Center's
29 Director of Security; and was a dedicated member of Ebenezer Baptist Church; and

30 WHEREAS, Reverend Bennette gave inspiration to many through his high ideals, morals,
31 and deep concern for his fellow citizens, and the devotion, patience, and understanding he
32 demonstrated to his family and friends were admired by others; and

33 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous man who demonstrated his commitment to
34 witnessing Christ through word and deed, Reverend Bennette will long be remembered for
35 his love of family, friendship, and community and will be missed by all who had the great
36 fortune of knowing him.

37 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
38 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Reverend Fred C.
39 Bennette, Jr., and express their deepest and most sincere regret at his passing.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
41 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the
42 family of Reverend Fred C. Bennette, Jr.