

Senate Resolution 296

By: Senators Anderson of the 43rd, Strickland of the 17th, Au of the 48th, Rhett of the 33rd, Davenport of the 44th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Commending and congratulating the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival for their outstanding
2 efforts to foster a long and steady friendship between the City of Conyers and the Country
3 of Japan; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival unites thousands of participants from the
5 region to encourage better understanding of Japanese culture and other diverse nations and
6 to celebrate 40 years of cultural history through international music, dance, arts, crafts, food,
7 games, and family entertainment; and

8 WHEREAS, the history of the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival stems from the gifting of
9 several Yoshino Cherry Blossom trees that are planted throughout the City of Conyers,
10 signifying an alliance; and

11 WHEREAS, these cherished gifts, also known as Sakura, came from Hideo Ogino, former
12 president of Maxell Corporation of America, to represent the friendship between nations, the
13 renewal of spring, and the ephemeral nature of life; and

14 WHEREAS, in 1982, Maxell and the Rockdale-Conyers Chamber of Commerce held the first
15 Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival, scheduled during the blossoming of the beautiful Yoshino

16 Cherry Blossom trees, the subject of nationwide adoration since the Heian period in Japan
17 more than 1,000 years ago; and

18 WHEREAS, traditionally, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival featured cooking classes,
19 silk flower arranging, Oriental doll exhibits, Origami demonstrations, Kabuki theater, bonsai
20 tree exhibits, karate demonstrations, and a Haiku contest; the festival still incorporates many
21 of these cultural connections; and

22 WHEREAS, its growth in attendance and exhibitors made it necessary to relocate the festival
23 from the grounds of Maxell to the Georgia International Horse Park; the City of Conyers and
24 the Georgia International Horse Park now oversee and present the annual Conyers Cherry
25 Blossom Festival; and

26 WHEREAS, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival continues to carry on the tradition of this
27 important community event; the festival has become one of the largest and most successful
28 events in the Southeast; and

29 WHEREAS, for the 38th annual celebration, a number of invited guests from Japan made
30 their first United States appearances, including Sakura Yabusame Ayuko Uemura, a
31 horseback archer from Towada City, and Miki and Chikako Nakashima, two sisters who
32 specialize in Japanese calligraphy from Fukoka, Atlanta's sister city; Kinuyo Shinobu-Kai
33 also graced the stage with a visually stunning Japanese dance performance; and

34 WHEREAS, in 2018, the City of Conyers honored Takashi Shinozuka, the consul general
35 for the Consulate of Japan, at the Cherry Blossom Festival with a special ceremony; the
36 United States Customs and Border Protection Honor Guard Team presented the United States
37 flags, and Mayor Vince Evans gave the consul general a flowering white dogwood tree and

38 a framed display of United States Postal Service "Gifts of Friendship" forever stamps
39 featuring dogwood and cherry blossom trees as a gesture of goodwill and to commemorate
40 the day; and

41 WHEREAS, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival is faithful to family and to the community
42 and prides itself on giving back through year-long student art projects, pageantry, and
43 auxiliary events, including The Kiwanis Club Cherry Blossom Golf Tournament at Cherokee
44 Run Golf Course, the annual Cherry Blossom Charity Croquet Tournament at Oxford
45 College of Emory University, and the Conyers Police Explorers Dash into Spring 5K; and

46 WHEREAS, since 2016, the Conyers Rockdale Council for the Arts and Rockdale County
47 Public Schools have teamed up to present the annual Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival
48 Student Photography Contest; winning photographs remain on display at Piedmont Rockdale
49 Hospital and are later recognized at the festival; and

50 WHEREAS, the Miss Conyers Cherry Blossom Scholarship Pageant is the local franchise
51 for the Miss Georgia and Miss America Pageant System, and the winning contestants of the
52 pageant are introduced at the festival each year; and

53 WHEREAS, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival, with the support of the City of Conyers,
54 its participants, and a variety of partnering sponsors from the community, has the distinctive
55 honor of being named a multi award-winning event; it has achieved top honors in multiple
56 categories of the Kaleidoscope Awards and been recognized by the Southeast Festival and
57 Events Association, including Best Event, Best Marketing Campaign, Best Event within an
58 Event, and Best Photograph.

59 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
60 commend the City of Conyers and Georgia International Horse Park for its dedication to the
61 community and state through the festival; congratulate the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival
62 on the remarkable occasion of its 40th anniversary; and extend their sincerest best wishes for
63 the festival's continued success to strengthen the unity and embracement of all cultures.

64 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
65 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the Conyers Cherry
66 Blossom Festival and to the consulate general of Japan in the Southeast.