

Senate Resolution 302

By: Senators Anderson of the 43rd, Seay of the 34th, Lucas of the 26th, Halpern of the 39th,
Butler of the 55th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Commending and congratulating the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival for its outstanding
2 efforts to foster a long and steady friendship between the City of Conyers and country of
3 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 42 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 were 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 Chamber of Commerce held the first Conyers Cherry
15 Blossom Festival, scheduled during the blossoming of the beautiful Yoshino Cherry Blossom

16 trees, the subject of nationwide adoration since the Heian period in Japan, more than 1,000
17 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, in 1991, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Foundation was formed to organize and
23 oversee the festival and related events; its growth in attendance and exhibitors made it
24 necessary for the foundation to relocate the festival from the grounds of Maxell to the
25 Georgia International Horse Park; and

26 WHEREAS, in 1999, the foundation contracted with the City of Conyers and the Georgia
27 International Horse Park to oversee and present the annual Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival;
28 in 2006, the City of Conyers received full rights to the festival; and

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

32 WHEREAS, for the 38th annual celebration, the Consulate of Japan flew in several special
33 guests from Japan to make their first United States appearance at the Conyers Cherry
34 Blossom Festival: audiences enjoyed a visually stunning dance performance by Kinuyo
35 Shinobu-Kai; renowned champion horseback archer Sakura Yabusame; Ayuko Uemura from
36 Towada City; and Japanese calligraphy sisters Miki and Chikako Nakashima from Fukuoka,
37 Atlanta's sister-39 city; and

38 WHEREAS on March 25, 2018, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival honored Takashi
39 Shinozuka, the Consul General for the Consulate of Japan, with a special ceremony in
40 appreciation of Japan's generosity and to continue the spirit and tradition of the deep-rooted
41 bond between the City of Conyers and Japan; the United States Customs and Border
42 Protection Honor Guard Team presented the United States flags tribute and Mayor Vince
43 Evans gave the Consul General a flowering White Dogwood Tree and 10 framed United
44 States forever postage stamps of the Cherry Blossom and Dogwood trees to commemorate
45 the day; and

46 WHEREAS, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival is faithful to family and to the community
47 and prides itself on giving back through student art projects, pageantry, and auxiliary events,
48 including The Kiwanis Club Cherry Blossom Golf Tournament at Cherokee Run Golf
49 Course, the Annual Cherry Blossom Charity Croquet Tournament at Oxford College of
50 Emory University, and the Conyers Police Explorers Dash into Spring 5K, as well as
51 introducing two new young artists' workshops in 2023: Bluebirds & Blossoms and Cherry
52 Blossom Sculptures, and Treasures in the Trees, a free month-long family activity to
53 celebrate nature and the advent of spring, hosted by the Big Haynes Creek Nature Center;
54 and

55 WHEREAS, since 2016, the Conyers Rockdale Council for the Arts and Rockdale County
56 Schools have teamed up to present an annual Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival Student
57 Photography Contest; winning photographs remain on display at Piedmont Hospital and are
58 recognized at the festival; and

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

62 WHEREAS, the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival, with the support of the City of Conyers,
63 its participants, and a variety of partnering sponsors from the community, has the distinctive
64 honor of being named a Multi-Award-Winning event; it has achieved top honors in multiple
65 categories of the Kaleidoscope Awards, recognized by the Southeast Festival and Events
66 Association (SFEA), including Best Event Over \$75,000, Best Marketing Campaign, Best
67 Event within an Event, Best Photograph, Best Sponsor, Best Merchandise, and Best Mascot.

68 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
69 commend the Georgia International Horse Park for its dedication to the community and state
70 through the festival; congratulate the Conyers Cherry Blossom Festival on the remarkable
71 occasion of its 42nd anniversary; and extend their sincerest best wishes for the festival's
72 continued successes to strengthen the unity and embracement of all cultures.

73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
74 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the Conyers Cherry
75 Blossom Festival and to the Consulate General of Japan in the Southeast.