

Senate Resolution 581

By: Senators Jackson of the 41st, Butler of the 55th, Parent of the 42nd, Davenport of the 44th, Harrell of the 40th and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing and commending Michael Thurmond; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, Michael Thurmond is the chief executive officer of DeKalb County, Georgia,
3 one of the largest and most diverse counties in the Southeastern United States; and
- 4 WHEREAS, as chief executive officer, he ushered in a "New Day" of trust, accountability,
5 and integrity in the county government; and
- 6 WHEREAS, he implemented an innovative response to the COVID-19 pandemic that
7 included: mitigating food insecurity by distributing 139,000 boxes of fresh fruits, vegetables,
8 and protein to struggling families; administering 10,000 COVID-19 vaccinations through the
9 "Get Vaxxed!" incentive program; investing \$10 million in crime prevention initiatives that
10 included bonuses and front line pay for police, fire, and other essential workers; distributing
11 \$54 million in rental assistance to 2,500 tenants and landlords; and creating 4,000 virtual
12 summer jobs for young job seekers; and
- 13 WHEREAS, in 1986, Thurmond became the first African-American elected to the Georgia
14 General Assembly from Athens/Clarke County since Reconstruction; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1998, he was elected Georgia Labor Commissioner, becoming one of the first
16 African-Americans to be elected to state-wide office in Georgia; and

17 WHEREAS, he earned the reputation of being a "turnaround expert" after transforming the
18 culture and operations of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, the Georgia
19 Department of Labor, and the DeKalb County School District; and

20 WHEREAS, a sharecropper's son, he holds a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and religion
21 from Paine College and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of South Carolina's School
22 of Law and also completed the Political Executives program at the John F. Kennedy School
23 of Government at Harvard University; and

24 WHEREAS, his book *Freedom: Georgia's Antislavery Heritage, 1733-1865*, was awarded
25 the prestigious Georgia Historical Society's Lilla Hawes Award, and in 2004, the Georgia
26 Center for the Book listed *Freedom* as "One of the Twenty-Five Books All Georgians Should
27 Read"; and

28 WHEREAS, he is married to Zola Fletcher Thurmond, and they have one daughter, Mikaya;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the outstanding accomplishments of this
31 remarkable and distinguished Georgian be appropriately recognized.

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
33 recognize and commend Michael Thurmond for his efficient, effective, unselfish, and
34 dedicated public service to the State of Georgia and extend the most sincere best wishes for
35 continued health and happiness.

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
37 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Michael
38 Thurmond.