

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 625

By Hazlewood

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pay tribute to the ninety-five sheriff's offices in the State of Tennessee but especially the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office in Chattanooga, which will commemorate its bicentennial anniversary on October 25, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the roots of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office can be traced to Charles Gamble, who relocated from Knox County in 1806, taking residence on a farm in Sale Creek; when Hamilton County was established on October 25, 1819, by the General Assembly, he was named one of three commissioners to begin the new government and was elected as the first sheriff for the county; and

WHEREAS, since the establishment of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office in 1819, there have been a total of forty-five sheriffs who have served over the past 200 years; during that time, the Sheriff's Office has lost one sheriff, one chief deputy, one constable, and nine deputies who were killed in the line of duty protecting and serving the citizens of Hamilton County; and

WHEREAS, the forty-fifth and current sheriff, Jim Hammond, who was elected in 2008, has been serving continuously since then as the senior law enforcement official in Hamilton County and is the constitutionally mandated keeper of the jail, the server of process, the provider of security for the courts, and the protector of the people; and

WHEREAS, the fourth-largest sheriff's office in Tennessee, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office oversees 572 square miles with over 360,000 inhabitants, employs more than 450 people, and has been continually recognized for its superior accomplishments in law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, Sheriff Hammond has inspired the agency's mission statement of "Commitment to Excellence For All Citizens With Fair and Equitable Performance"; and

WHEREAS, inspired by this commitment to excellence by the agency's personnel for its citizens, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office has a long history of offering many outstanding programs and services, including the passage of a "Sheriff's Civil Service Law" in 1980 by the Hamilton County Commission and the Bridge Plan, which became effective in 2018 and ensures that POST-certified deputies within the Sheriff's Office have the opportunity to retire at age sixty with additional benefits; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Information Systems/Technology Division was established and since that time has created a new records management system linked with the City of Chattanooga, an electronic fingerprinting and mugshot system for the Corrections Division, and an Electronic Jail Commissary complete with grievance forms, video visitation, and electronic cell checks as well as overseeing the installation of laptop computers in all patrol vehicles in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Marine Division was established in 1987 and currently has two boats, a twenty-foot and a twenty-four-foot Boston Whaler, which are used primarily on the Tennessee River and its tributaries to assist the boating public, as well as for patrol, rescue, recovery, and security services for special events; and

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Underwater Response Team (SURT) (Dive Team) was created around 2008 to assist the Marine Division and the CBRNE Division, which works to detect and defend against hazardous and malicious chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive substances existing either under or on top of the water or in the air; and

WHEREAS, in November 2017, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office took over supervision of the Silverdale Detention Center, with an average population of 1,000, from Hamilton County Government; and

WHEREAS, established in 2010, the Criminal Justice Internship Program has graduated more than fifty college junior and senior criminal justice students and is considered the finest criminal justice internship in the Southeast; and

WHEREAS, dedicated to the safety of our children, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office initiated its School Resource Officer Division in 2006 and currently has thirty-six school resource officers on thirty-four campuses across Hamilton County; and

WHEREAS, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office received the Advanced Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) in November 2013 and received the American Correctional Accreditation for the jail in 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office is currently pursuing accreditation from the National Commission on Correctional Healthcare and, with that accreditation, will then achieve the National Sheriffs' Association's famed Triple Crown Accreditation; this honor is so rare that since its establishment in 1933, fewer than 100 sheriff's offices across the country, including five in Tennessee, have qualified; and

WHEREAS, with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office's many accomplishments and its dedication to excellent law enforcement protection and service to the citizens of Hamilton County over the past 200 years, the sheriffs and employees, past and present, are clearly deserving of our respect, admiration, and commendation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office on the occasion of its bicentennial anniversary, October 25, 2019, and salute its continuing service to the people of the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.