

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1225

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation on reaching 1 million children.

WHEREAS, the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation recently reached 1 million children served with its message of booster seat and seat belt safety usage and work zone safety; and

WHEREAS, the origin of this exemplary organization began with Carol Coleman, who, having lost three close family members in traffic accidents, sought to "do something" in 2006 when her husband, Johnny Coleman, became president of the Tennessee Road Builders Association (TRBA) and she became president of the TRBA's Ladies Auxiliary; and

WHEREAS, after the TRBA Board of Directors allocated funds to explore a children's highway safety program that would include roadside construction safety, Mrs. Coleman recommended a seat belt/booster seat program for schoolchildren to coincide with the Tennessee General Assembly's recently enacted legislation that gave Tennessee the most advanced seat belt law in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the TRBA established a separate nonprofit foundation, now known as the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation, and entered into an agreement with Tennessee Technological University to design, develop, and implement an education program driven by a character named Ollie Otter; and

WHEREAS, the Ollie Otter program grew quickly beyond initial projections and has received numerous State, regional, and national awards, enjoying success outside Tennessee as well, with nine other states adopting a similar program; and

WHEREAS, having visited all ninety-five counties in Tennessee, the Ollie Otter program continues to provide educational materials about booster seats and car seats to children through approximately 350 school presentations and community events annually; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee Technological University's I-Cube staff members have been so successful in running the Ollie Otter program and other traffic safety initiatives that they have been designated by the Tennessee Highway Safety Office as Tennessee's Center for Occupant Protection; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the funds provided by the TRBA, the program has received grants and strong support from the Tennessee Highway Safety Office and a specific tie-in with the Tennessee Highway Patrol; and

WHEREAS, the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation has developed public partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Safety, the Tennessee Department of Health, and the Tennessee Department of Education as well as with the Tennessee Board of Regents, the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, and the Tennessee Association of School Superintendents; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation celebrated 250,000 children served by the program; by 2013, the program had surpassed the 500,000 mark, and in March 2020, the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation marks 1 million children served; and

WHEREAS, this remarkable endeavor is worthy of our approbation on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor the Ollie Otter Child Safety Foundation on reaching 1 million children, commend the organization's mission to ensure the safety of Tennessee's children, and extend to it our best wishes for much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.