

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1301

By Watson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Dawn Richards and Dr. Elizabeth Forrester for establishing a COVID-19 testing laboratory at Baylor School.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize two scientific researchers who have increased the testing capacity for COVID-19 in Chattanooga and this State; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dawn Richards and Dr. Elizabeth Forrester have established an innovative laboratory to analyze COVID-19 test samples at the Weeks Science Building on the campus of Baylor School, of which they are both faculty members; and

WHEREAS, when Hamilton County confirmed its first case of coronavirus on March 13, 2020, followed by more cases in the following days, the research scientists recognized the need for Southeast Tennessee to expand its testing capabilities; and

WHEREAS, at that time, it took up to seven days to learn if a person who had been tested for COVID-19 was positive or negative for the coronavirus, in large part due to the bottleneck of tests arriving at the few laboratories in the region that had the equipment and personnel capable of analyzing a test sample; and

WHEREAS, when the Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention test kit, which made materials more accessible to complete the technique used to test a specimen for the virus, Dr. Richards and Dr. Forrester quickly realized they could conduct tests in Baylor's laboratory, which has access to technologies that are normally found only at universities and research institutions; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Richards and Dr. Forrester obtained the necessary reagent, ingredients used to conduct the technique that tests for COVID-19, and in just a few long days and nights of

practicing in the Baylor lab, the research scientists felt confident in their abilities to analyze actual test samples; and

WHEREAS, when testing for COVID-19, they use a technique called an assay to identify the genetic material of common viruses by isolating and amplifying a genetic signature specific to the virus; the entire process only takes four hours to complete, thus dramatically increasing the number of tests that can be processed; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dawn Richards is chair of Baylor's science department and a molecular microbiologist who holds Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Oceanography from the University of Delaware's College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Elizabeth Forrester holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) and Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Cancer Biology from Vanderbilt University; she has established the Partnership in Research and Laboratory Learning with the UTC chemistry department and partnered with the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a personalized online course for Introductory/Advanced Placement Biology. She has ongoing research projects in biochemistry and cancer biology at UTC and the University of the South; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dawn Richards and Dr. Elizabeth Forrester epitomize the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of true Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Richards and Dr. Forrester have performed their duties with the utmost skill, dedication, and professionalism, and it is fitting that they be honored at this time; 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, on behalf of a grateful public, we honor and commend Dr. Dawn Richards and Dr. Elizabeth Forrester for establishing a COVID-19 testing laboratory at Baylor School, thank them for their tireless efforts to analyze test samples, and extend our best wishes for every future 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.