

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1506

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the formation of the Watauga Association.

WHEREAS, 2022 marks the 250th anniversary of the formation of the Watauga Association, providing a historic opportunity for the citizens of Tennessee and all Americans to remember the achievements of our founding generation; and

WHEREAS, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had forbidden settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, and as British rule became increasingly oppressive, people began to move west across the Blue Ridge; and

WHEREAS, being outside the authority of the thirteen British colonies, the settlers in the Watauga River valley saw the need for law and order and joined together to create a compact to "govern and direct for the common good of the people"; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1772, meeting under a large sycamore tree by the Doe River in what is now Elizabethton, settlement leaders drafted articles of governance for the Watauga Association and later negotiated a land lease and purchase with the Cherokee, formed a court and a militia, and organized the defense of the settlement; and

WHEREAS, the Watauga Association existed as a body of democratic self-rule for five years before being annexed by North Carolina in 1777 as Washington County; and

WHEREAS, the Watauga Association was recognized by civic leaders of the time as an indication that self-governance was possible by means of forming governments "distinct from and independent of his majesty's authority"; and

WHEREAS, the Watauga Association is described by historians as "the first men of American birth to establish a free and independent community on the continent...successfully solving the problem of self-government"; and

WHEREAS, today, all American citizens share in the inheritance of liberty born from ideas generated by the Watauga Association and are indebted to the bravery, principles, and sacrifices of all who have aided and defended the continuation of an independent and free society; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that we should celebrate the 250th anniversary of this momentous occasion in American history; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby officially commemorate the 250th anniversary of the formation of the Watauga Association, paying respectful tribute to the origin of self-governance in 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 and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.