

No. R-31. House concurrent resolution congratulating the town of Brandon on its 250th anniversary.

(H.C.R.23)

Offered by: Representative Acinapura of Brandon

Offered by: Senators Ayer and Giard

Whereas, one of the oldest municipalities in Rutland County is the New Hampshire Grant town of Brandon that was established on November 3, 1761, when Governor Benning Wentworth issued a charter for a new town of “About Six Miles square . . . Beginning at the North Westerly Corner of Pittsford,” and

Whereas, this new community was originally called Neshobe (meaning a water-associated place in several Native American languages) after the Neshoba section of Littleton, Massachusetts, the birthplace of Josiah Powers, the first-named grantee on the charter, and

Whereas, years passed before the first settlers arrived in 1772, and on October 7, 1784, the town of Neshobe conducted an organizational town meeting, and for unknown reasons, requested the Vermont General Assembly to change the name of the town to Brandon, and

Whereas, on October 20, 1784, almost exactly 23 years after the New Hampshire charter was granted, the Vermont General Assembly brought Brandon’s charter under its own jurisdiction when it adopted, “An Act to establish the doings of a certain town meeting held in the town of Neshobe, and to alter the name of said town of Neshobe,” and

Whereas, two distinctive settlements emerged in the town, Brandon Village, much of which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and Forest Dale, where a major ironworks center was established early in the 19th century, and

Whereas, by 1823, the Forest Dale blast furnace was producing pig iron and a variety of ornamental irons, and among the owners of the furnace, which in 2011 remains one of the best preserved of its kind, were the Green Mountain Iron Company and the Brandon Iron Company, which purchased and closed the facility in 1865, and

Whereas, in 1834, Thomas Davenport, who was working in Forest Dale, was credited with inventing the first electric motor, and in Brandon Village, John Conant manufactured cast-iron stoves which became highly cherished during the 19th century, and

Whereas, in the middle 1850s, John Howe Jr., working in Brandon Village, where he had operated the Brandon Iron and Car Wheel Company, and in partnership with technology processing patent holders Francis Strong and Thomas Ross, established the internationally known Howe Scale Company, and

Whereas, in 1856, the Newton and Thompson Manufacturing Company was established and operated in Brandon for well over 100 years, making wooden boxes, toys, and other articles while employing over 100 people, and

Whereas, without question, the most famous Brandon native is Stephen A. Douglas who was born in 1813, represented the state of Illinois in the United States Senate, debated Abraham Lincoln in a series of famous encounters in 1858, and whose life was commemorated with a monument in Brandon that was dedicated in 1913 on the 100th anniversary of his birth, and

Whereas, in 1832, the Vermont Scientific and Literary Institution at Brandon was established and operated by the Baptist Seminary, and it evolved into one of the finest secondary education institutions in the state, and

Whereas, in 1875, the home of the Ayrshire Breeders' Association was established in Brandon and devoted to the preservation of breed records and the promotion of the Ayrshire breed, employing as many as 65 people in 1948, until its relocation out-of-state in 1982, and

Whereas, from 1915–1993, the town was home to the Brandon Training School, a state-operated residential care institution for the emotionally and mentally challenged, and

Whereas, the town of Brandon experienced a number of major fires in 1918, 1919, 1936, and 1943, and the great flood of 1938, and in each instance, the local citizenry demonstrated enormous resilience, and

Whereas, in 2011, the town will observe its 250th anniversary and plans to mark this auspicious occasion with memorable commemorative and celebratory events, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the town of Brandon on its 250th anniversary, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Brandon town clerk.