

1 HJR713
2 131987-1
3 By Representative Laird
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 25-MAY-11

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8 REDESIGNATING ALABAMA AS A STATE OF CHARACTER AND
9 PLEDGING TO PROMOTE CHARACTER.

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11 WHEREAS, the people of Alabama recognize the
12 importance of having citizens with honorable character
13 qualities based upon the moral standards upon which our nation
14 and legal system are established; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1995, the Legislature acknowledged our
16 history as a nation and the importance of teaching and
17 promoting character principles in order to develop a
18 successful workforce and citizenry by including the Alabama
19 Character Education Mandate in the Education Reform Act of
20 that year (Act 95-313), requiring public schools to teach all
21 students 26 character traits for no less than 10 minutes each
22 day; and

23 WHEREAS, we desire to build upon our heritage in
24 making Alabama a place where families are strong, homes and
25 streets are safe, education is effective, business is
26 productive, neighbors care about one another, and citizens are
27 free to make wise choices for their lives and families; and

1 WHEREAS, we recognize that individuals are
2 responsible for their actions and that daily decisions should
3 be based upon sound timeless values that are the basis of
4 universally recognized character qualities, including
5 kindness, courage, loyalty, diligence, generosity,
6 truthfulness, honesty, and obedience; and

7 WHEREAS, a lack of commitment to these values and
8 irresponsibility have resulted in an increasing number of
9 significant problems causing personal, social, and financial
10 consequences to individual family members and to society as a
11 whole; and

12 WHEREAS, our prisons are running at approximately
13 200 percent of planned capacity and there is a need for more
14 positive role models among our young people to discourage
15 juvenile delinquency, encourage positive individual character
16 and develop an understanding of those qualities that made our
17 country strong and prosperous; and

18 WHEREAS, when people fail to adhere to positive
19 character qualities or make poor moral choices, the health,
20 safety, and welfare of the citizens are endangered, resulting
21 in an increased financial burden upon the taxpayers for the
22 costs of lower productivity, increased social services, and
23 additional law enforcement; and

24 WHEREAS, many current societal problems will be
25 alleviated when citizens live by positive and constructive
26 character qualities that give one the courage to choose the
27 harder right over the easier wrong; and

1 WHEREAS, research has shown that quality programs
2 that teach and reinforce positive character qualities to
3 juvenile delinquents produce a change of behavior and reduce
4 recidivism rates; and

5 WHEREAS, our children learn and develop best in a
6 safe school atmosphere in which character is exemplified,
7 taught, and strengthened; and

8 WHEREAS, research shows that workplace morale,
9 employee safety, productivity, and corporate performance are
10 significantly improved where positive character qualities are
11 expected and recognized, and such actions are essential as
12 Alabama competes for 21st Century jobs in a global market; and

13 WHEREAS, presidents throughout our nation's history
14 have promoted character principles and encouraged character
15 education as a high priority for America's schools, and
16 furthermore, highly regarded civic and religious leaders have
17 extolled character as one of the qualities by which all people
18 are judged; and

19 WHEREAS, the Legislature of Alabama, both houses
20 thereof concurring, committed Alabama as a state of character
21 in the years 2000, 2005, and 2008; and

22 WHEREAS, the Alabama Board of Education, through its
23 mission statement, the Education Ruler, designated safe
24 schools and character education as a top priority in its first
25 sentence in this official document, and the Alabama State
26 Superintendent continues to promote the Alabama Education

1 Ruler, which specifically lists character education as a
2 priority; and

3 WHEREAS, the Character Council of Alabama has been
4 reconstituted for the purpose of promoting, developing, and
5 reinforcing a strong character environment in all aspects that
6 touch the lives of Alabama's citizens, will identify and
7 recognize the "best practices" and resources that build and
8 reinforce positive character attributes, and will facilitate
9 access, coordination, and implementation of these resources
10 and "best practices" so as to foster the implementation of
11 Alabama as a State of Character; now therefore,

12 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
13 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we reaffirm our 2000 and 2005
14 declarations of Alabama as a State of Character, and appeal to
15 the Board of Education and its Superintendent for their
16 continuing cooperation and efforts implementing character
17 education strategies that provide proven results. Further, we
18 appeal to all the partners identified herein to cooperate,
19 collaborate, and support the efforts of the Character Council
20 of Alabama to foster this Alabama State of Character
21 Initiative. We pledge to do all in our power to promote this
22 Alabama State of Character resolution and character
23 development in our schools, homes, churches, local
24 governments, state agencies, media, and community groups, and
25 we urge leaders of each of these areas to do likewise.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this
27 resolution be made available to the Alabama Constitutional

1 Officers and Governor's cabinet so that each may know of this
2 important designation and our request for their cooperation in
3 a collaborative effort to develop, implement, and sustain the
4 Alabama State of Character Initiative.