HR143

U5Y3GGX-1

By Representatives Shaw, Underwood

RFD: RULES

First Read: 02-Apr-24

HR____ ESTABLISHING THE ALABAMA-JAPAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE GROUP.

WHEREAS, The State of Alabama and the Nation of Japan are established partners in the global economy, with mutual trade in 2022 between Alabama and Japan reaching nearly two billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, Alabama's relationship with Japan transcends purely economic endeavors, with friendship expressed through sister city relationships between Birmingham and both Hitachi and Maebashi, Anniston and Tatsuno, Tuscaloosa and Narachino, Dothan and Sakado, Mobile and Ichara, and Montevallo and Echizen; and

WHEREAS, the Japanese Garden in the Birmingham Botanical Gardens is recognized by the government of Japan as an official Japanese Cultural Center, and many Alabamians take a lively interest in Japanese culture through organizations such as Bonsai and garden societies, exhibitions, events such as the Sakura festival in Tuscaloosa, and the Japan-America Society of Alabama (JASA); and

WHEREAS, students at Alabama universities and colleges have been enriched by visits to Japan for study, including students from Birmingham-Southern College, Samford University, University of West Alabama, The University of

Alabama at Birmingham, The University of Alabama, Auburn University, The University of Alabama in Huntsville, Troy University, Talladega College, and Miles College; and

WHEREAS, Japan is a bulwark of democracy in a region overshadowed by China and threatened by North Korea, hosting approximately 55,000 American military personnel on more than 80 bases; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a regional ally, Japan is a key partner of the United States on the international stage, collaborating with our nation in many critical areas that include global security, development assistance, environmental protection, new energy technologies, supercomputing, critical materials, and space; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the Alabama-Japan Legislative Exchange Group is created to pursue friendship and cooperation between the members of the House of Representatives and the people, government, and businesses of Japan.

(a) The Alabama-Japan Legislative Exchange Group shall be comprised of the following members:

(1) One member of the House of Representatives representing the majority party, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(2) One member of the House of Representatives, representing the minority party, appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) Any member of the House of Representatives who requests membership, with the approval of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(b)(1) The initial meeting of the Alabama-Japan Legislative Exchange Group shall be called by the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than December 1, 2024, at which time or thereafter the group may elect a chair and any other officers as necessary to conduct the work of the group. Meetings of the legislative exchange group may be convened as often as is expedient, provided that the group shall convene at least once per calendar year. The legislative exchange group may meet by electronic means.

(2) The legislative exchange group shall provide an annual report of its activities to the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than the tenth legislative day of each Regular Session, along with any recommendations or requests that may assist its work.

(3) The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall provide administrative and other assistance for the work of the legislative exchange group as necessary.

(c) The work of the legislative exchange group may include any educational, cultural, or outreach initiative to pursue on behalf of the Alabama House of Representatives with Japan.

(1) Nonprofit organizations, including the Japan-America Society of Alabama, may be invited to share knowledge and expertise.

(2) The group may inform the Government of Japan of

its work, initiatives, or proposals through the Honorary Consul General of Japan for Alabama and the Consul General of Japan in Atlanta.

(d) The Speaker of the House of Representatives may dissolve the group for any reason.