

1 SJR103
2 170331-2
3 By Senator Sanders
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 03-JUN-15

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8 RENAMING THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE THE JOURNEY TO
9 FREEDOM BRIDGE.

10
11 WHEREAS, in 1940, 33 years after his death, the
12 bridge spanning the Alabama River in Selma was named for
13 Edmund Pettus, a Grand Dragon of the Alabama Ku Klux Klan,
14 among other things; and

15 WHEREAS, Edmund Pettus will forever be remembered
16 for the enforcement of laws that prevented African Americans
17 from equal access to education, jobs, political
18 representation, and other benefits of American citizenship;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, 25 years after the Edmund Pettus Bridge was
21 built, people all over America and the world watched a moment
22 in history that would forever change the course of their
23 nation; as peaceful marchers fearlessly crossed the bridge,
24 the nation had its consciousness awakened by images of the
25 brutality wreaked upon them by those sworn to uphold the law;
26 and

1 WHEREAS, this moment became known as Bloody Sunday;
2 subsequently, there was the Turn Around Tuesday March and the
3 Selma to Montgomery March over the Edmund Pettus Bridge; and

4 WHEREAS, these marches became forever remembered as
5 a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black
6 Belt City of Selma would be remembered as a beacon of change
7 that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

8 WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act and other civil
9 rights legislation initiated by the Civil Rights Movement have
10 been crucial in establishing equal rights; and

11 WHEREAS, 50 years after Bloody Sunday and other
12 marches, Selma's young people gathered over 180,000 signatures
13 over a period of two months in support of renaming the bridge,
14 and this new generation of young people believes that the
15 current name of the bridge is a symbol of the past that must
16 be changed; and

17 WHEREAS, there are many things in our society to
18 change that are more significant than the name of a bridge,
19 but removing this vestige of the past will serve as a parallel
20 to the ongoing journey towards equal rights, fair
21 representation, and open opportunity; it is a statement by
22 Selma's young people and the rest of the country that we will
23 continue to strive towards equal opportunity for all American
24 people; and

1 WHEREAS, there are so many incredible freedom
2 fighters, martyrs, and civil rights leaders that paved the way
3 for the changes wrought in the last 50 years; and

4 WHEREAS, although there are many nonviolent leaders
5 and foot soldiers who deserve to be honored, rather than
6 creating the John Lewis Bridge, the Amelia Boynton Bridge, the
7 Viola Liuzzo Bridge, or the Jimmie Lee Jackson Bridge, the
8 young people have proposed that the bridge be renamed the
9 "Journey to Freedom Bridge"; and

10 WHEREAS, the Journey to Freedom Bridge will be a
11 lasting monument that will encompass the entirety of the Civil
12 Rights Movement and all the individuals that have fought and
13 continue to fight to lift all people; it is a promise that in
14 the next 50 years things in Selma, Alabama, and the nation
15 will be better than they were 50 years ago as this generation
16 commits to continue our country's ongoing journey to freedom;
17 now therefore,

18 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
19 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the bridge once known as the
20 Edmund Pettus Bridge shall henceforth be renamed and known as
21 the Journey to Freedom Bridge.