

1 HJR305
2 177219-1
3 By Representatives Sanderford, Baker and Rowe
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 19-APR-16

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8 COMMENDING SERGEANT JOE COTNER OF THE MOBILE POLICE
9 DEPARTMENT AS A NOMINEE FOR THE 2016 ALABAMA LEGISLATIVE MEDAL
10 OF HONOR FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT.

11
12 WHEREAS, it is with highest commendation that we
13 recognize Sergeant Joe Cotner of the Mobile Police Department
14 as a nominee for the 2016 Alabama Legislative Medal of Honor
15 for Law Enforcement, Alabama's highest law enforcement award
16 for extraordinary courage in the line of duty; and

17 WHEREAS, on March 2, 2015, Sergeant Cotner was
18 advised by a parent of unsafe conditions and potential abuse
19 at Saving Youth Foundation, a residential treatment center;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Sergeant Cotner interviewed the parent and
22 her daughter, who had been removed from the facility, and
23 determined that more information was needed; he coordinated
24 with the Department of Human Resources and the Mobile County
25 Health Department to inspect the facility and interview some
26 of the children in residence; during this process, it was
27 discovered that the living conditions were unsanitary with

1 multiple code and food violations, the care was deficient to
2 the point of a systematic pattern of willful neglect and abuse
3 by the staff; and

4 WHEREAS, as a result of Sergeant Cotner's instincts
5 to follow up and thoroughly investigate, 36 children were
6 rescued and removed from the facility, three staff were
7 charged with 24 counts of Aggravated Child Abuse, and the
8 facility was closed; due to the action of Sergeant Cotner,
9 associated residential treatment facilities in other states
10 are being investigated for similar issues; and

11 WHEREAS, Sergeant Cotner demonstrated courage,
12 diligence, and responsibility in an adversarial situation; his
13 loyalty and unwavering commitment to protect and serve the
14 residents of Mobile were evidenced through his willingness to
15 take steps to insure these children were removed from a
16 situation that was unsafe, abusive, and potentially dangerous;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Sergeant Joe Cotner epitomizes the
19 qualities of those who serve and protect, and he is truly
20 deserving of this distinguished nomination for the Legislative
21 Medal of Honor for Law Enforcement; now therefore,

22 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
23 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we hereby recognize and honor
24 Sergeant Joe Cotner as a nominee for the 2016 Legislative
25 Medal of Honor for Law Enforcement and direct that he receive
26 a copy of this resolution as evidence of our admiration and
27 esteem.

