

1 SR9
2 215574-1
3 By Senators Hatcher, Albritton, Allen, Barfoot, Beasley,
4 Butler, Chambliss, Chesteen, Coleman-Madison, Dunn, Elliott,
5 Figures, Givhan, Gudger, Holley, Jones, Livingston, Marsh,
6 McClendon, Melson, Orr, Price, Reed, Roberts, Sanders-Fortier,
7 Scofield, Sessions, Shelnutt, Singleton, Smitherman, Stutts,
8 Waggoner, Weaver, Whatley and Williams
9 RFD:
10 First Read: 02-NOV-21

URGING THE STATE OF ALABAMA TO EXPUNGE THE RECORD OF
MS. CLAUDETTE COLVIN.

WHEREAS, on this occasion, this body finds it
fitting and proper to recount the accomplishments and
sacrifices of Ms. Claudette Colvin in support of the
expungement of her criminal record; and

WHEREAS, Claudette Colvin was born in Birmingham,
Alabama, on September 5, 1939, to C.P. Austin and Mary Jane
Austin (Gadson); she is the oldest of eight sisters; during
her early childhood, her adopted parents, Q.P. and Mary Ann
Colvin, lived in the rural community of Pine Level, Alabama;
Ms. Colvin attended the Springhill Baptist Elementary School,
then located on Ramer Route 1; later, Ms. Colvin moved to the
King Hill community of the state capital, Montgomery; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Colvin was arrested for a felony at the
age of fifteen, after refusing to give up her bus seat to a
young white passenger on March 2, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama
- nine months before Rosa Parks's arrest; her arrest sparked a
successful lawsuit against segregated bus seating in

1 Montgomery, led by famed Civil Rights attorney Fred D. Gray;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, although Ms. Colvin did not finish her
4 senior year at Booker T. Washington School, which she attended
5 from 1949 to 1956, partially due to her dedication to the
6 social justice movement, she worked hard to earn her G.E.D.
7 and attended the Alabama State Teachers College in Montgomery;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Ms. Colvin's legacy simmered quietly until,
10 as early as 1979, her name started surfacing during Negro
11 History Month; Frank Sikora of the Birmingham News wrote a
12 feature story on Ms. Colvin in 1980; in 1990, New York
13 Governor Mario M. Cuomo awarded her with the MLK, Jr. Medal of
14 Freedom, New York State's highest honor of recognition for
15 outstanding accomplishments in civil and human rights; the
16 Selma Times-Journal featured her in 1991; the National Voting
17 Rights Museum and Institute added a picture display dedicated
18 to Ms. Colvin in 1994; Lifetime Television featured her story
19 in 1995; Ms. Colvin was featured in the cover stories of USA
20 Today, the Montgomery Advertiser, and the Washington Post; she
21 has been mentioned in several books, including "Freedom's
22 Children" by Ellen Levine, "Parting the Waters" by Taylor
23 Branch, and "Bus Ride to Justice" by attorney Fred D. Gray;
24 Phillip Hoose's 2009 biography, "Claudette Colvin, Twice
25 Toward Justice" received the Newberry Honor Book Award; and

26 WHEREAS, despite many considering Ms. Colvin's 1955
27 act of civil disobedience to be the greatest achievement in

1 her life, Ms. Colvin always kept her eye on the future, and
2 "paid it forward" to the next generation; by sharing her
3 story, she has empowered parents, community leaders, and
4 public officials to become change agents; her giving spirit is
5 also shown by the success of her descendants; she is the
6 mother of two boys, the elder whom sadly passed at her home in
7 1993; her younger son earned his Doctorate in Business
8 Administration from Georgia State University and is now an
9 Assistant Professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville; she
10 has five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; she says
11 often that she "reaps the fruits of her labors" through her
12 growing family and those others whom she has inspired; and

13 WHEREAS, the courageous and noble actions of Ms.
14 Colvin should not appear as a criminal record; rather, this
15 state should ensure that her bravery is forever lauded and
16 appreciated as true heroism, the type of heroism that Alabama
17 and America sorely needed then, and still need now; as she
18 fiercely said, "when it comes to justice, there is no easy way
19 to get it. You can't sugarcoat it. You have to take a stand
20 and say, 'This is not right.'"; and

21 WHEREAS, in light of all the above, as well as her
22 many endeavors that we cannot possibly all recite here, this
23 body cannot imagine any person more deserving of a clean
24 criminal record, as Ms. Colvin has spent her whole life using
25 her servant's heart and strength of conviction for the benefit
26 of all her fellow humans; this is the spirit of a true
27 American and a true Alabamian; now therefore,

1 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF
2 ALABAMA, That this body hereby urges all appropriate
3 authorities of the State of Alabama to take whatever action
4 necessary to ensure that the criminal record of Ms. Claudette
5 Colvin is expunged.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this
7 resolution be delivered to the presiding judge of the
8 Montgomery County Family Court and to Ms. Claudette Colvin, so
9 that the most fervent opinion of this body on this issue might
10 be known, and so that Ms. Colvin's contributions to the State
11 of Alabama are now properly recognized by the State of Alabama
12 as the courageous acts of service that they always were.