

1 SJR73  
2 218304-1  
3 By Senators Marsh and Orr  
4 RFD:  
5 First Read: 09-MAR-22

ALABAMA, A STATE OF CHARACTER.

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

WHEREAS, the people of Alabama recognized the importance of citizens with honorable character qualities based upon the moral standards upon which our nation and legal system are established; and

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

WHEREAS, we recognize that individuals are responsible for their actions and that daily decisions should

1 be based upon sound timeless values that are the basis of  
2 universally recognized character qualities, including  
3 kindness, courage, loyalty, diligence, generosity,  
4 truthfulness, honesty, and obedience; and

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

10 WHEREAS, when people fail to demonstrate positive  
11 character qualities or make poor moral choices, the health,  
12 safety, and welfare of the citizens are endangered, resulting  
13 in financial burden upon the taxpayers for the costs of lower  
14 productivity and increased social services and law  
15 enforcement; many current societal problems will be alleviated  
16 when citizens live by positive and constructive character  
17 qualities that distinguish between right and wrong, and it has  
18 been shown that teaching and reinforcing positive character  
19 qualities to juvenile delinquents produces a change of  
20 behavior, reducing recidivism rates; and

21 WHEREAS, our prisons far exceed planned capacity and  
22 there is a need for more positive role models among our young  
23 people to discourage juvenile delinquency and for these  
24 individuals to understand those qualities that have made our  
25 country strong and prosperous; and

1           WHEREAS, our schools should be safe climates in  
2           which character is exemplified, taught, and strengthened, and  
3           learning is encouraged; and

4           WHEREAS, encouraging employees by recognizing  
5           positive character qualities has resulted in an increase in  
6           workplace morale, employee safety, and corporate profits; such  
7           action is essential as Alabama competes for 21st Century jobs  
8           with states in which character is emphasized; and

9           WHEREAS, presidents throughout our nation's history  
10          have promoted character principles and have encouraged  
11          character education as a high priority for America's schools;  
12          many other highly regarded civic leaders have extolled  
13          character as among the qualities by which all people should be  
14          judged; and

15          WHEREAS, the Alabama Legislature must address the  
16          challenge of allocating and stretching very limited resources  
17          very far, because of education and social needs; and

18          WHEREAS, the Alabama Legislature has repeatedly  
19          appealed for the promotion of character-building strategies  
20          through its approval of "Alabama, a State of Character"  
21          resolutions in 2000, 2005, 2008, 2014, 2018, and 2022 and the  
22          Alabama House of Representatives in 2011; and

23          WHEREAS, the Alabama Legislature again appeals for  
24          character-building strategies to be promoted in a  
25          collaborative way by partners, and we, as Alabama lawmakers,  
26          again appeal for there to be creative efforts to support and  
27          promote practical and affordable strategies for this state

1       which will help Alabama to take the lead with the "States of  
2       Character" movement; now therefore,

3               BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
4       HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we reaffirm our 2000, 2005,  
5       2008, 2014, and 2018 declarations of Alabama as a State of  
6       Character, and appeal to partners to collaborate when  
7       developing and supporting the implementation of character  
8       building strategies. As Alabama leaders, we agree to support  
9       the development of "State of Character" strategies and to  
10      encourage cooperation with other legally declared States of  
11      Character for the States of Character movement to positively  
12      influence our nation. We pledge to do all in our power to  
13      promote this Alabama, A State of Character resolution and  
14      character education in our schools, businesses, homes,  
15      churches, local governments, state agencies, media, and  
16      community groups, and we urge leaders of each of these areas  
17      to do likewise.