

HR251 INTRODUCED



1 HR251

2 KV9QUU5-1

3 By Representatives Drummond, Pringle, Jones, Shirey, Simpson,
4 Clarke, Holk-Jones, Fidler, Wilcox, Stringer, Brown

5 RFD:

6 First Read: 02-May-24



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HR_____ HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RETIRED UNITED STATES
MARINE CORPS MAJOR GENERAL JEROME GARY COOPER.

WHEREAS, with profound regret and sorrow, we note the death on April 27, 2024, of former Alabama State Representative and retired United States Marine Corps Major General Jerome Gary Cooper; his passing leaves a void in the lives of his loving family, many friends, and the community at large, where he was highly regarded; and

WHEREAS, Jerome Gary Cooper was born on October 2, 1936, in Lafayette, Louisiana, to Algernon J. Cooper, Sr. and Gladys Mouton Cooper, the oldest of six children; and

WHEREAS, he received his Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps upon graduation in June 1958; following graduation from The Basic School, he initially reported for duty with the 1st Marine Brigade in Hawaii; General Cooper served on active duty for 12 years, commanding a number of units, including the Marine Detachment aboard the Guided Missile Cruiser Chicago; in 1967, he became the first Black officer in the Marine Corps to lead an infantry company into combat, a fact which is noted in the historical calendar of the Corps; and

WHEREAS, in Vietnam, General Cooper earned a number of decorations for heroism including the Bronze Star, two



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29 Purple Hearts for wounds received in ground action, and the
30 Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry three times; his other
31 military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal
32 and the Legion of Merit; and

33 WHEREAS, he joined the Individual Ready Reserve in
34 January 1970; as a reservist, he commanded the 13th Force
35 Reconnaissance Company in Mobile, the 4th Battalion, 14th
36 Marines, 4th Marine Division, and a number of other
37 mobilization assignments including Commanding General,
38 Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; in 1988, he
39 was promoted to Major General and returned to active duty as
40 Director of Personnel, Headquarters, United States Marine
41 Corps; he retired from the Corps in 1996; and

42 WHEREAS, in 1974, General Cooper was elected to the
43 Alabama House of Representatives; he was one of the first
44 African-Americans since the Reconstruction era elected to
45 the Legislature from South Alabama; he was reelected in 1978
46 but resigned to serve in the Governor's Cabinet as
47 Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources;
48 in this cabinet position, Commissioner Cooper managed a
49 staff of over 4,000 and the largest agency budget in the
50 State of Alabama; and

51 WHEREAS, President Bush, in 1989 appointed, and the
52 United States Senate confirmed, Mr. Cooper as the Assistant
53 Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower, Reserve Affairs,
54 Installations and the Environment; he participated in the
55 planning of Operation Desert Storm and served throughout the
56 Bush Administration; and



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57 WHEREAS, from 1992 to 1994, Mr. Cooper was the Senior
58 Vice President of David Volkert and Associates, a regional
59 engineering and architectural firm; he also served as Vice
60 President of David Volkert & Associates from 1981 to 1989;
61 and

62 WHEREAS, in 1994, President Clinton selected Mr.
63 Cooper to serve as the United States Ambassador to Jamaica;
64 upon Senate confirmation, Ambassador Cooper presented his
65 credentials to the Governor General of Jamaica on November
66 4, 1994; he returned to his home in Mobile, Alabama, in
67 December 1997; and

68 WHEREAS, Mr. Cooper faithfully served as Chairman of
69 CNB Bancorp, Incorporated, until his retirement in 2022;
70 additionally, he served on numerous other boards including
71 the Community Foundation of South Alabama; the American
72 Friends of Jamaica; U.S. Steel, Incorporated; PNC Financial
73 Services, GenCorp.; Protective Life Insurance Company; and
74 the Air University Board of Visitors; Gary was very proud to
75 serve as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for
76 Commonwealth National Bank, the first minority owned
77 National Bank in Alabama; and

78 WHEREAS, Mr. Cooper was a member of the Omega Psi Phi
79 Fraternity, 100 Black Men of Greater Mobile, the Montford
80 Point Marine Association, the NAACP Unit 5044, and the
81 Marine Corps League; in addition, he was active in numerous
82 other community organizations, especially those serving
83 youth such as the Hope Boxing Academy; and

84 WHEREAS, Gary Cooper is survived by his loving wife



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85 of 33 years, Beverly Martin Cooper; children, Patrick
86 Charles Cooper, Joli Claire Cooper, and Gladys Shawn Cooper;
87 grandchildren, Sophie Cooper (Dan Fishman), Celia Mouton
88 Cooper, Patrick Samuel Cooper, Oliver Cooper, Ashley Harold
89 Cooke III, Alana Marian Nelson, and Anthony Cooper Nelson,
90 Jr.; one beautiful great-granddaughter, Annalise Boaz Cooper
91 Fishman; brother, Algernon Cooper, Jr.; sister, Dominique
92 Cooper; special nephew, Christopher Cooper (Amy); and a host
93 of other nieces and nephews, family, and friends; and

94 WHEREAS, Major General Jerome Gary Cooper lived a
95 long and productive life and was a valued member of the
96 community, and his presence will be greatly missed; we
97 recognize his selfless dedication to his country and to this
98 great State of Alabama, and his life of service is highly
99 commended; now therefore,

100 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
101 LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the death of Major General
102 Jerome Gary Cooper is recorded with deep sadness, and by
103 copy of this resolution we convey our highest esteem and our
104 heartfelt condolences to his family.