

House Resolution 1676

By: Representatives Atwood of the 179th, Jones of the 167th, Spencer of the 180th, and Wilkinson of the 52nd

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring Bessie Jones, Alan Lomax, and the Sea Island Singers; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the Sea Island Singers began in the 1920s on Sea Island and have gone on to
3 perform at the 1994 Winter Olympics and for three sitting presidents, including President
4 Jimmy Carter's inauguration, and to be enshrined at the Library of Congress; and
- 5 WHEREAS, Alan Lomax, a legendary folklorist and musicologist, repeatedly visited St.
6 Simons Island in the mid-20th century to document the singers' traditions; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Bessie Jones was born in Dawson, Georgia, and moved to Sea Island after
8 marrying into a local family; and
- 9 WHEREAS, she joined and led the Sea Island Singers, modernizing their repertoire through
10 sheer force of personality, and she worked with Mr. Lomax in the 1960s to bring the Sea
11 Island folk traditions to a wider audience; and
- 12 WHEREAS, Ms. Jones's efforts were fully realized this year when the Coastal Georgia
13 Historical Society and the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition hosted a weekend
14 of events surrounding the "repatriation" of Alan Lomax's Sea Island Singers' recordings; and
- 15 WHEREAS, Ms. Jones and Mr. Lomax worked to document and empower the Sea Island
16 culture.
- 17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
18 the members of this body honor Bessie Jones, Alan Lomax, and the Sea Island Singers for
19 their exemplary work in celebrating and preserving the Sea Island culture.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
21 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
22 families of Bessie Jones and Alan Lomax and to the Sea Island Singers.