

Senate Resolution 813

By: Senators Butler of the 55th, Gooch of the 51st, Halpern of the 39th, Orrock of the 36th, Brass of the 28th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing April 8, 2024, as Henry Louis Aaron Day in the State of Georgia; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, on April 8, 1974, Henry Louis Aaron, achieved the unimaginable, hitting his
4 715th career home run, establishing himself as one of the greatest to ever play the game of
5 baseball; and

6 WHEREAS, Henry Aaron, affectionately known as Hank to his millions of adoring fans, set
7 the standard for excellence on and off the baseball field; and

8 WHEREAS, he was born in Mobile, Alabama, on February 5, 1934, one of eight children,
9 to Herbert and Estella Aaron; and

10 WHEREAS, despite growing up in the segregated South in the midst of Jim Crow, he
11 showed grit and determination, slugging bottle caps with a broomstick to develop his skills
12 as a baseball player; and

13 WHEREAS, he boarded a train in 1951 to play for the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro
14 American League, before signing a contract to play with the Braves organization; and

15 WHEREAS, he was assigned to the Eu Claire Bears, where he won the league's Rookie of
16 the Year; and

17 WHEREAS, he then joined the Jacksonville Braves, where he overcame tremendous hostility
18 as he integrated the South Atlantic League, yet he led the team to a championship and won
19 the Sally League MVP; and

20 WHEREAS, he joined the big league club in 1954 and immediately became a force in the
21 game; and

22 WHEREAS, playing with an indelible mix of tenacity, humility and grace, he had a career
23 unmatched in the history of baseball; and

24 WHEREAS, he hit 30 or more home runs 15 times, hit at least .300 in 14 seasons, never
25 striking out more than 97 times in a season; and

26 WHEREAS, he led the league in batting two times, home runs four times, and RBIs four
27 times while winning three Gold Gloves for defense and one National League MVP; and

28 WHEREAS, his 25 appearances in the All-Star game speak to his immense popularity and
29 longstanding greatness; and

30 WHEREAS, his most memorable moment also took the greatest toll on him, facing intense
31 opposition and threats of death, while he pursued a place in history once thought
32 unattainable; and

33 WHEREAS, on the night of April 8, 1974, Hank Aaron hit a long ball for the ages; and

34 WHEREAS, when home run number 715 sailed over the left field wall in Atlanta Stadium,
35 it was a seminal moment for Atlanta, Georgia, and the south: Hank brought us together like
36 no one else; he was our hero, he was our Home Run King; and

37 WHEREAS, his astonishing career didn't end when he retired from playing baseball, and he
38 was a trailblazing executive in the Braves front office, helping build one of the best
39 organizations in professional sports; and

40 WHEREAS, he also built an empire of automobile dealerships and restaurants that still
41 thrives today; and

42 WHEREAS, the nation has responded to his greatness with recognition fit for the Home Run
43 King; he was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility; and

44 WHEREAS, in 1999, Major League Baseball created the Hank Aaron Award to honor the
45 best offensive player in each league; and

46 WHEREAS, his many accolades are too numerous to list in full, but highlights include
47 receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States;
48 and

49 WHEREAS, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund presented him with the Thurgood Marshall
50 Lifetime Achievement Award and established the Hank Aaron Humanitarian in Sports
51 Award in his honor; and

52 WHEREAS, he left this earth in 2021, but his impact continues to be felt, as he and his wife
53 Billye started the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation to provide scholarships at
54 HBCUs around the country; and

55 WHEREAS, the Braves, Major League Baseball, and the Major League Baseball Players
56 Association established the Henry Louis Aaron Fund, which supports Hank's life-long
57 passion to increase minority participation in baseball on the field and in front offices; and

58 WHEREAS, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his momentous achievement, the
59 State of Georgia recognizes Henry Louis Aaron for the profound impact he had on our state,
60 the nation and the world; and

61 WHEREAS, with one swing of the bat, Hank inspired everyone to overcome hatred, division,
62 and prejudice and to accomplish things that no one ever thought possible.

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
64 recognize April 8, 2024, as Henry Louis Aaron Day in the State of Georgia.

65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
66 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the family of Henry
67 Louis Aaron and to the public and the press.