

Senate Resolution 5EX

By: Senators Kennedy of the 18th, Sims of the 12th, Gooch of the 51st, Robertson of the 29th, Walker III of the 20th and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Rosalynn Carter; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished citizens
3 with the passing of Rosalynn Carter on November 19, 2023; and
- 4 WHEREAS, born on August 18, 1927, in Plains, Georgia, as Eleanor Rosalynn Smith, she
5 was the beloved daughter of Wilburn and Frances Smith; and
- 6 WHEREAS, she excelled academically, becoming valedictorian of her senior class at Plains
7 High School, and continued her education at Georgia Southwestern College, where she met
8 and fell in love with her future husband, Jimmy Carter; and
- 9 WHEREAS, her life took on a new dimension when Jimmy was elected as the Governor of
10 Georgia in 1971, and she navigated the challenges of being the First Lady of Georgia with
11 grace and commitment to causes close to her heart, such as mental health awareness and
12 prison reform; and

13 WHEREAS, by the time Jimmy ran for president in 1976, Rosalynn's new-found experience
14 and confidence in delivering speeches, advocating for causes, and interacting with legislators
15 distinguished her as a trailblazer and enabled her to continue fighting for reform; and

16 WHEREAS, just five weeks after Inauguration Day, the President's Commission on Mental
17 Health was established with Rosalynn serving as honorary chairperson, which later
18 recommended a sweeping new Mental Health Systems Act that called for more community
19 centers and additional access to mental health services; and

20 WHEREAS, as the First Lady of the United States, Rosalynn continuously broke new and
21 vital ground by actively participating in cabinet meetings and National Security Council
22 briefings, addressing Congress on vital issues, and becoming the second-ever first lady to
23 testify before Congress when she spoke in defense of her commission's Act; and

24 WHEREAS, her unwavering commitment to public service extended into her post-White
25 House years, where she co-founded the Carter Center in 1982 alongside her husband to
26 address global issues such as disease prevention, democracy-building, and conflict
27 resolution; and

28 WHEREAS, Rosalynn's dedication to helping her community and the underprivileged of the
29 world was evident in the countless hours she spent supporting the Americus-based
30 homebuilding organization Habitat for Humanity, for which she was an active participant in
31 building homes for families across the globe; and

32 WHEREAS, her commitment to service continued with the establishment of the Rosalynn
33 Carter Institute for Caregiving at Georgia Southwestern State University in 1987, which

34 provides training and research on issues related to mental illness and long-term disabilities;
35 and

36 WHEREAS, in the face of health challenges, Rosalynn remained steadfast in her devotion
37 to her family and her country, leaving behind a legacy of advocacy, resilience, and
38 partnership that has left an indelible mark on the nation and the world.

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
40 join in honoring the life and memory of Rosalynn Carter and express their deepest and most
41 sincere regret at her passing.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
43 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the family of
44 Rosalynn Carter.