

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 681

By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION congratulating the City of Kingsport upon its recent award.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly recognize those cities that, through their constant striving towards excellence, have brought great honor to this State; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kingsport, which was recently honored as one of the winners of the prestigious 2009 Innovations in American Government Award, is one such city that is wholly deserving of the recognition of this body; and

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2009, the City of Kingsport was announced as one of six winners of the award and as one of three recipients of an accompanying \$100,00 grant, after receiving the greatest number of votes among the sixteen finalists; and

WHEREAS, the Innovations in American Government Awards are given by The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in recognition of governmental programs that promote excellence and creativity in the public sector; and

WHEREAS, those governmental programs are evaluated on novelty, effectiveness, transferability, and the degree to which they successfully address important problems of public concern; and

WHEREAS, since 1985, The Ash Institute has recognized more than 400 governmental programs at the federal, state, and local levels; the City of Kingsport has garnered national attention for its dedicated work to promote and advance higher education, and its efforts will serve as a template for other governmental bodies that seek to create successful programs and initiatives in this area; and

WHEREAS, led by a number of visionaries, including Mayor Dennis Phillips, former mayor Jeanette Blazier, and City Manager John Campbell, the City of Kingsport has undertaken a number of higher education initiatives over the past decade in a successful attempt to revitalize the city's economic and educational base; and

WHEREAS, those initiatives include: an economic summit held in 1999, which was dedicated to improving the economic and educational condition of the city in response to job losses at Eastman Chemical Company; the Educate and Grow scholarship program, founded by Kingsport in 2001 and later expanded by Sullivan County, which provides tuition assistance for local high school students; the Regional Center for Applied Technology; a satellite location for Northeast State Community College; the Regional Center for Health Professions, which houses all of Northeast State Community College's medical programs; the Kingsport Center for Higher Education, which enables students to earn four-year degrees from a number of colleges and universities; and the concept of an Academic Village, which is located in the downtown area; and

WHEREAS, Kingsport's higher education initiatives have resulted in a number of successes, including the expansion of a more diversified economy, a increase in sales tax revenues, an increase in new construction, and the relocation of 2,700 families who have decided to make Kingsport their new home in the past two years; and

WHEREAS, Kingsport's award-winning initiatives will serve as a model for good governance and will inform research and academic study at Harvard and elsewhere around the globe, serving as the basis for present and future case studies; and

WHEREAS, chosen from among more than 700 applicants from across the country, Kingsport will utilize the \$100,000 grant to produce a series of videos on the city's programs and the programs of the five other finalists and to disseminate the program as widely as possible in an effort to educate other governments and the general public about the programs' effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, awards such as the Innovations in American Government Awards are given only to those who are most deserving of the recognition. It is wholly appropriate that we formally recognize the City of Kingsport upon earning this incredible honor; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the City of Kingsport be honored and commended upon its receipt of a 2009 Innovation in American Government Award, given by The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and applaud the city's promotion and advancement of higher education and its unwavering dedication to providing for the needs of its citizenry

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy .