

By: Senator(s) Jackson (11th), Caughman,
Blackwell, Browning, Burton, Dearing,
Fillingane, Frazier, Jackson (32nd), Jolly,
Massey, McMahan, Seymour, Watson

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 503

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE COMMENDATION OF THE
2 MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE AND REMEMBERING THE OUTSTANDING
3 ACHIEVEMENT OF U.S. ARMY RESERVE SERGEANT RANDY SANDIFER OF
4 PINOLA, MISSISSIPPI, WHO WAS NOMINATED FOR THE 2014 NOBEL PEACE
5 PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMANITARIAN RESEARCH WHILE STATIONED
6 IN THE WAR ZONE AT THE ABU GHRAIB FACILITY IN IRAQ.

7 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we remember the
8 outstanding achievement of United States Army Reserve Sergeant
9 Randy Sandifer of Pinola, Mississippi, in being nominated for the
10 2014 Nobel Peace Prize for research that helped close the doors of
11 the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq during the War on Terror; and

12 WHEREAS, when Army Reserve Sergeant Randy Sandifer of Pinola
13 deployed to Iraq as a sophomore at Ole Miss, he did not realize he
14 was on a journey that would take him not only overseas, but
15 eventually would tie his name to one of the most prestigious
16 honors in the world; and

17 WHEREAS, Sandifer, now 34 and a Ballistics Expert at the Army
18 Crime Lab in Atlanta, was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for
19 research he did while stationed at Abu Ghraib Prison, research
20 that ultimately would lead to the closure of the controversial



21 facility. That year Pakistan's Malala Yousafzai and India's
22 Kailash Satyarthi won the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize for their
23 struggles for the rights and against the oppression of children;
24 Sandifer's nomination stood through 2015; and

25 WHEREAS, Sandifer's job with the 412th Theater Engineer
26 Command was actually to work as an Administrative Clerk. Having
27 been a science buff at Piney Woods High School and knowing one day
28 he would like to work in forensics, Sandifer volunteered to work
29 in the lab, doing environmental testing on the land occupied by
30 Abu Ghraib, where he not only worked, but where his unit stayed.
31 "You can do environmental testing all day, but it is a difference
32 when the consequence is closing down a prison such as Abu Ghraib.
33 Especially in the context of what it meant to the United States,
34 it was a blemish," Sandifer said; and

35 WHEREAS, the lab was testing for hydrocarbon levels in the
36 soil, which affected the local water supply. "Just a small amount
37 of hydrocarbon being in the soil can throw an ecosystem completely
38 off," he explained. "Dealing with the Iraqis, and how they
39 function, their ecosystem feeds directly to their livelihood
40 because they raise livestock, farm, and they do so much in the
41 environment they are in. They still live off the different rivers
42 that run through there. While most people think of the War on
43 Terror as being all about actual war, Sandifer said there was a
44 rebuilding process all along, part of which was going on in the
45 lab. To Sandifer, that's what it was all about. It was more of a



46 mindset of peace and humanitarianism, of having an impact without
47 violence and making a difference, and we did." Another research
48 project Sandifer worked on was designed to improve bridges and
49 roads. A design he developed actually served to diffuse the
50 damage done by improvised explosive devices, possibly saving
51 untold numbers of lives; and

52 WHEREAS, Sandifer did all this without an engineering degree.
53 Through advanced individual training and volunteering in the labs
54 after hours, Sandifer ended up learning and teaching himself the
55 necessary skills to support his mission. In 2006, he spoke to a
56 group at Ole Miss about how detrimental it is not to be aware of
57 our environmental footprint, based on his experiences cleaning up
58 after Abu Ghraib. Sandifer said for he and his contemporaries,
59 the mission to help rebuild and strengthen Iraq was also driven by
60 patriotism; and

61 WHEREAS, now the expert firearms and toolmark examiner and
62 graduate from Piney Woods School can say he has accomplished more
63 by age 30 than he ever thought he would, not the least of which is
64 the Nobel Peace Prize nomination. While Sandifer does not know
65 what the future will bring, he is grateful for the chance at the
66 honor and the road that led him there; and

67 WHEREAS, Randy Sandifer is a wonderful example for
68 Mississippi students and servicemen, and it is with great pride
69 that we commend his record of achievement and legacy of leadership
70 to all in Mississippi:



71 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
72 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
73 we do hereby commend United States Army Reserve Sergeant Randy
74 Sandifer of Pinola, Mississippi, who was nominated for the 2014
75 Nobel Peace Prize for Environmental and Humanitarian Research
76 while stationed in the War Zone at the Abu Ghraib Facility in Iraq
77 and extend our best wishes to Randy and his family for future
78 successes.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
80 Randy Sandifer and his family, forwarded to the Piney Woods
81 School, the University of Mississippi, and be made available to
82 the Capitol Press Corps.

