MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2002

By: Senator(s) Gollott

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 4

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING COLONEL RAY T. "TOM" GARZA FOR HIS DEDICATED AND EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza, Vice Commander of the 81st Training Wing, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, is being transferred to another assignment; and

WHEREAS, the 81st Training Wing provides technical training for officers, airmen and civilians of the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard and other agencies of the Department of Defense in numerous electronic, avionics, computer, personnel and information career fields; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza enlisted in the United States Air Force in October 1972; and

WHEREAS, he was commissioned as a distinguished military graduate of the Officer Training School in October 1976; and

WHEREAS, he was an honor graduate; Weapons Controller ECCM Operations Course in 1977; honor graduate, Air Weapons Director Staff Officer Course in 1985; an F-15 Blue Force Controller, AMRAAM Operational Utility Evaluation in 1984; and NORAD Cheyenne Mountain Assistant DCS Operations Junior Officer of the Year in 1984; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza served in the Directorate of Operations, United States Central Command, including nine months in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza is a Master Air Battle Manager who has flown 23 combat support sorties as AWACS Mission

Crew Commander in Operations SOUTHERN WATCH and PROVIDE COMFORT, enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary career, Colonel Garza's talents and contributions have been recognized with many awards and decorations, including the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Combat Readiness Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three service stars, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi) and the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait); and

WHEREAS, Colonel Garza was rewarded with promotions throughout his military career, beginning with his promotion to Second Lieutenant on October 29, 1976; First Lieutenant on October 29, 1978; Captain on October 29, 1980; Major on March 1, 1987; Lieutenant Colonel on April 1, 1992; and Colonel on July 1, 1998; and

WHEREAS, under Colonel Garza's leadership over 16,000 personnel from four military branches trained over 60,000 students from the United States and abroad in Air Traffic Control, Weather Forecasting, Medicine, Computer Networking, Electronics, Avionics, Administration, Military Doctrine, and many other specialties. This replenished the ranks of our war-fighting and humanitarian forces, many of which are deployed today in support of homeland defense and the war on terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Garza managed over $200 Million in infrastructure improvements, including a new marina, shopping mall ("base exchange"), military family homes, and the burying of utilities to keep them operational during future hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Garza also managed efforts, in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, to restore much of the environment at Keesler Air Force Base to its

pristine state. These efforts and the wetlands protection and enhancements for aquatic life at Keesler Air Force Base have been recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency and community groups; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Garza housed and supported 800 coaches and athletes for two Mississippi State Special Olympics meets and stressed the volunteerism that resulted in 380,000 man-hours of effort during his tenure; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Mississippi Senate to recognize and commend the exemplary military service and community contributions of citizens like Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza who dedicated his life to serving the citizens of the United States and the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza for his dedicated and exemplary service and community contributions to the citizens of the United States and the State of Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to Colonel Ray T. "Tom" Garza.