



Introduced Version

**HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. _____**

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED RESOLUTION

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION honoring Joel Sonnenberg for his courage and exceptional attitude in the face of great adversity.

Turner

_____, read first time and referred to Committee on

20002485

2000

HC 1061/DI 84+



HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION honoring Joel Sonnenberg for his courage and exceptional attitude in the face of great adversity.

Whereas, On September 15, 1979, Joel Sonnenberg received third degree burns over 85 percent of his body;

Whereas, His story begins on Interstate 95 north of Nyack, New York;

Whereas, The 22-month-old Joel, his father, Mike Sonnenberg, and Mike's brother-in-law, Doug Rupp were stopped at a toll booth just over the New Hampshire state line;

Whereas, Without warning, a 36-ton tractor-trailer slammed into a line of five cars waiting at the toll booth;

Whereas, The Sonnenberg car immediately burst into flames. Mike Sonnenberg and Doug Rupp ran from the car, each thinking the other had grabbed Joel;

Whereas, A passerby, Michael Saraceni, heard the toddler crying and rushed to the car with a fire extinguisher and heroically pulled Joel from the car;

Whereas, This is where the real story of courage and dedication begins;

Whereas, Joel was rushed to Harvard Medical Complex in Boston, Massachusetts, where he was given only a 10 percent



chance of survival;

Whereas, Joel survived and was finally released from the Shriners Burn Institute on February 2, 1980;

Whereas, Upon Joel's release from the hospital, a new struggle began for the Sonnenberg family - a struggle to do everything they could to enable Joel to live a normal life;

Whereas, Joel has not only lived a normal life but also has prospered;

Whereas, Today, Joel is 21 years of age and a junior at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, majoring in communications;

Whereas, As Joel has grown, so has the list of his accomplishments. He is an Eagle Scout, was captain of his high school soccer team, was voted prince of his junior prom, carried the 1996 Summer Olympics torch through his community, and was named the Western North Carolina Citizen of the Year in 1996;

Whereas, Joel received a \$17,500 college scholarship from Discover Card based on his high school performance, extracurricular activities, and inspiring attitude toward life;

Whereas, Even though Joel's life has exceeded most people's expectations, he is still plagued by the physical and emotional pain of 45 surgeries, continual stares from strangers, and the occasional cruel comment;

Whereas, Joel credits his success in overcoming adversity to his strong belief in God. He believes that his purpose in life is to show that "God is good"; and

Whereas, The real miracle is not simply that Joel survived but that he has flourished and developed into such a fine human being who is able to see that good exists in all things: Therefore,



*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives
of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana,
the Senate concurring:*

- 1 SECTION 1. That the Indiana General Assembly wishes to express
2 its heartfelt admiration for Joel Sonnenberg and his family and to wish
3 them continued happiness and success in the future.
4 SECTION 2. That the Principal Clerk of the House of
5 Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to Joel Sonnenberg
6 and his family.

