

## Senate Resolution No. 1718

By Senators Bowers and Wilborn

3-22

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1 A RESOLUTION honoring the lives lost during the construction of the  
2 Kansas State Capitol.

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4 WHEREAS, The Kansas State Capitol was constructed between 1866 and  
5 1903; and

6 WHEREAS, When the Kansas State Capitol was built, the construction  
7 field lacked basic safety standards; and

8 WHEREAS, Construction workers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries  
9 worked in one of the most challenging and dangerous employment  
10 fields; and

11 WHEREAS, The construction of the Kansas State Capitol and, in  
12 particular, the Capitol's dome came at a tragic and fatal cost; and

13 WHEREAS, The Kansas State Capitol construction workers completed  
14 tasks from dizzying heights with heavy machinery and little to no  
15 safety precautions; and

16 WHEREAS, At least seven construction workers lost their lives building  
17 the Kansas State Capitol; and

18 WHEREAS, According to information on the Capitol provided by the  
19 Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas State Library, Young  
20 Campbell was a 58-year-old stone mason from Topeka and married  
21 with seven children. Campbell was attempting to move a large stone  
22 with a wheelbarrow around a corner scaffolding. Unfortunately, the  
23 wheelbarrow tipped, causing Campbell to tragically fall from the  
24 scaffolding. He passed away on August 16, 1886; and

25 WHEREAS, Major Hiram W. Jones was a 67-year-old timekeeper from  
26 Lawrence and married with three children. Jones was working when a  
27 horse-drawn block, tackle and derrick system, which was constructed  
28 to hoist heavy stone and ironworks, collapsed. A falling stone and  
29 broken cable then hit Jones, and consequently, he passed away on  
30 October 6, 1887. Jones is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence;  
31 and

32 WHEREAS, William "Billy" Cullins was a 24-year-old machinist from  
33 Vermont and was to be married had tragedy not struck five days  
34 before his wedding date. Cullins passed away from a collapsed  
35 scaffolding on November 20, 1888. Cullins is buried at the Historic  
36 Topeka Cemetery; and

1 WHEREAS, Charles Ewing Howell was a 23-year-old iron worker from  
2 Leavenworth. Howell passed away after falling from the South Wing  
3 roof on September 21, 1889. Howell is buried at Mount Muncie  
4 Cemetery in Lansing; and

5 WHEREAS, Jack Williams was a 21-year-old electric motor operator  
6 from Topeka. Williams operated the new electric winch motor  
7 installed at the uppermost level of the dome to hoist heavy stone and  
8 ironworks. Williams fell to his death while attempting to climb down  
9 at the end of his workday on May 24, 1890; and

10 WHEREAS, John Cave was a 24-year-old iron worker from Scottsville  
11 and married with children. Cave was sitting astride the outer rim of the  
12 dome and tightening a bolt with a wrench so large that it required the  
13 use of both hands and all of his weight behind it. The wrench slipped,  
14 causing Cave to fall over the outside of the dome, through a skylight  
15 and into the North Wing below. Cave passed away on July 26, 1890;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Myrtie Deegan was a 48-year-old iron worker from Topeka  
18 and married with two children. Deegan was working inside the dome  
19 when he stepped on a loose, round piece of iron and fell to the  
20 rotunda, thus meeting an untimely death on December 9, 1890; and

21 WHEREAS, During the construction of the Kansas State Capitol,  
22 newspapers had reported another unidentifiable death that likely  
23 occurred in 1890; and

24 WHEREAS, Brave construction workers continued their honest and  
25 admirable work to ensure that the Kansas State Capitol was built, even  
26 after witnessing the horrific and devastating deaths of their fellow  
27 tradesmen and knowing that their work posed serious risks and some  
28 assignments were fraught with peril; and

29 WHEREAS, The selfless tradesmen who gave their lives to build the  
30 Kansas State Capitol have been forgotten for too long: Now, therefore,  
31 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That we honor the  
32 lives lost during the construction of the Kansas State Capitol; and

33 *Be it further resolved:* That we never forget the sacrifices that these  
34 construction workers made in constructing one of the most historic  
35 buildings in the State of Kansas; and

36 *Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate shall send 10  
37 enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Bowers.  
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