

A JOINT RESOLUTION, making a formal application to the President of the United States, that the President grant a presidential pardon to Peter L. Larson.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

WHEREAS, Peter L. Larson founded the Black Hills Institute of Geological Research in Hill City, South Dakota, in 1978, and has contributed ever since to South Dakota's education, history and culture through his work as a paleontologist; and

WHEREAS, a team led by Larson in August of 1990 discovered the Tyrannosaurus rex named Sue, the largest and most complete T. rex skeleton ever found; and

WHEREAS, when it was discovered that Sue was the largest and most scientifically important T. rex skeleton ever found, and therefore has a great value, Mr. Larson and his team became entangled in a protracted legal quagmire that resulted in South Dakota's longest criminal trial; and

WHEREAS, many independent observers have maintained that federal attorneys aggressively prosecuted the paleontologists, which resulted in Mr. Larson's felony convictions and a two-year federal prison sentence, unrelated to Sue; and

WHEREAS, on December 30, 2014, the editor of the Rapid City Journal, the largest newspaper in western South Dakota, stated that Mr. Larson's case "should be an embarrassment to any public official who played a role in the matter and allowed such a needless travesty to take place;" and

WHEREAS, fifteen years ago, Mr. Larson successfully completed his sentence, including two years' probation, and continues to lead an exemplary life in which he contributes greatly to worldwide science as well as South Dakota's education, culture, and tourism; and

WHEREAS, before and after his case, Mr. Larson represented South Dakota and the United States honorably, for example, he assisted in the development of paleontological guidelines by participating in a South Dakota State Paleontological Task Force and a National Academy of

Sciences Committee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Larson continues to express support of the legal system in national and international press interviews despite his unfortunate experiences; and

WHEREAS, since 1980, students of paleontology and geology have been invited to participate as interns at the Black Hills Institute's field sites and laboratories, and families, school children, and tourist groups, have been regularly welcomed to visit or volunteer at dinosaur excavations with Mr. Larson, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Larson continues to make himself available, without compensation, for innovative programs intended to reach out to the public and students in the classroom, such as a recent scholastic webcast and a CNN interactive blog, where participants ask questions, live; and continues to present scientific talks for audiences of all age and educational levels at museums, science centers, and public venues, in connection with his research, books, and the 2014 documentary Dinosaur 13; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Larson is known as one of the world's foremost Tyrannosaurus rex scientists and continues to excel in the field of paleontology, making new discoveries, publishing academic papers, working toward his doctorate degree, and gaining scientific recognition for his scientific work, in spite of the impact of his trial and felony convictions; and

WHEREAS, through exemplary citizenship, an ability to overcome adversity, and a positive attitude, all of which have inspired students, scientists, and entrepreneurs around the world, we believe Mr. Larson has earned the right to a clean slate:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Ninetieth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that we, the members of the South Dakota Legislature respectfully petition Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, to grant a Presidential pardon to Peter L. Larson of Hill City, South Dakota.

Making a formal application to the President of the United States, that the President grant a presidential pardon to Peter L. Larson.

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I certify that the attached
Resolution originated in the

HOUSE as Joint Resolution No.
1002

Chief Clerk

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Speaker of the House

Attest:

Chief Clerk

President of the Senate

Attest:

Secretary of the Senate

House Joint Resolution No. 1002
File No. _____
Chapter No. _____

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STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA,

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Office of the Secretary of State

Filed _____, 20____
at _____ o'clock __ M.

Secretary of State

By _____
Asst. Secretary of State

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