**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH H. “JOE” NEAL OF RICHLAND COUNTY, TO HONOR HIS REMARKABLE COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND TO EXTEND THEIR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS LOVING FAMILY AND HIS MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened to learn of the death of our esteemed colleague Representative Joseph H. “Joe” Neal of Hopkins at the age of sixty‑six on February 14, 2017; and

Whereas, born on August 31, 1950, he was the son of LaVerne K. Neal and Choatte R. Neal, Sr., and earned a bachelor of arts degree from Benedict College in 1972; and

Whereas, Reverend Neal completed post graduate studies at Colgate Divinity School in Rochester, New York, and Pittsburg Theological Seminary, and was the revered and longtime pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Chester. His alma mater awarded him an honorary doctorate of divinity, and Francis Marion University conferred on him an honorary doctorate of philosophy in humanities; and

Whereas, the vice president and CEO of New Horizons Systems, Inc., he was a great warrior for his community, serving in such capacities as the chairman of Citizens for Hopkins Community Organization, a past member of the South Carolina Fair Share board of directors, the founder and board member of Area Communities in Economic Development, the co‑founder of Citizens Local Environment Action Network (CLEAN), a board member of the South Carolina Environmental Watch, and a member of Moving Forward Community Group, the NAACP, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; and

Whereas, Representative Neal was elected to serve in the House of Representatives in 1992 and faithfully served the citizens of Richland and Sumter Counties in District 70 with distinction and merit, during which time he served on the Rules Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee; and

Whereas, serving as the Deputy Democratic Leader and as the chairman of the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus from 2000 to 2002, he afforded access and a clarion voice in his twenty‑four years service for those who had no voice, and he provided leadership for environmental causes, especially in rural districts; and

Whereas, as a gentle giant among his peers, he served on the Lower Richland Community Council of the Lower Richland Water Authority, as a past member of the First Union Bank Community Reinvestment Act advisory board, on the Rural Sumter Commission for Economic Development, as chairman of the Citizens for Hopkins Neighborhood Associations, on the Governor’s Nuclear Waste Task Force, as co‑chairman of the South Carolina Progressive Network, and as a board member of the African American Environmental Action Network; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is grateful for the life and legacy of Joe Neal, a strong believer in Christ whose strength was in Christ, and for the example of excellence and humility he set for all who knew him. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of Representative Joseph H. “Joe” Neal of Richland County, to honor his remarkable commitment to the General Assembly, and to extend their deepest sympathy to his loving family and his many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Representative Joseph H. “Joe” Neal.

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