**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEND AND RECOGNIZE THE PENGUINEERS, THE TEAM THAT SERVED AS CAPTAIN OF THE WINNING ALLIANCE AT THE SOUTH CAROLINA *FIRST* TECH CHALLENGE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE 2018/19 *FIRST* ROBOTICS SEASON AND ADVANCED TO THE *FIRST* CHAMPIONSHIP IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.

Whereas, the Penguineers, a community *FIRST* Tech Challenge (FTC) team representing the Myrtle Beach area, won the South Carolina *FIRST* Tech Challenge State Championship, a feat that earned these students a berth at the *FIRST* Tech Challenge World Festival at the *FIRST* Championship in Houston, Texas, in April; and

Whereas, the term “FIRST” is a registered trademark for the words “For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology”; and

Whereas, the mission of the Penguineers *FIRST* Tech Challenge team is to inspire other students to come together and participate in STEM activities beyond the traditional classroom. Through a balance of activities that include community outreach, mentorship, and participation in a competitive robotics program, the team aspires to show others what achievements are possible when people work together for a common goal; and

Whereas, the Penguineers team is composed of Mia Bailey, Ryan Bao, Alex Benz, Barlow Hoffman, James Jarrett, Connor Kiggins, Hunter Kuperman, Kainen Leer, Nicole Ward, Reagan McQueen, Aiden Rubbo, Trinity Starnes, and Josh Ulloa and is coached by Tom Hoffman, Hope Jarrett, Jennifer Kuperman, Colton Lloyd, and Louis Rubbo; and

Whereas, *FIRST* Tech Challenge is a student‑centered program that focuses on giving students a unique and stimulating experience. Each year, teams engage in a new game for which they design, build, test, and program autonomous and driver‑operated robots that must perform a series of tasks; and

Whereas, the 2018/19 *FIRST* Tech Challenge, working under the theme “Rover Ruckus,” challenges teams to design, build, program, and operate robots to compete in a head‑to‑head challenge using an alliance format. A team must be judged the best overall in order to advance; and

Whereas, team members of the Penguineers designed, built, and programmed a robot to autonomously complete missions such as landing on the playing field, sampling minerals, claiming their depot, and parking in a crater. During the driver‑controlled portion of a match, teams score points by sorting and placing many minerals in their alliance’s cargo hold or depot. During the last thirty seconds (known as the “end game”), teams can gain points by parking in a crater or go for big points if their robot can successfully latch onto the lander and lift itself off the playing field; and

Whereas, team members of the Penguineers created a detailed engineering notebook logging meetings, outreach, and design ideas and documenting the engineering process throughout the season. They presented their robot and engineering notebook to judges in order to qualify for awards. The Penguineers served as captain of the winning alliance and advanced to the world championship; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Robotics Education Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, conducted twelve regional competitions, two league tournaments, and one state championship; and

Whereas, the overall goal of the South Carolina Robotics Education Foundation is to stimulate students’ interest and capabilities in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields, thereby increasing the pool of talented and skilled students who pursue careers in these areas; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Robotics Education Foundation is the affiliate partner for *FIRST* Tech Challenge in South Carolina. *FIRST* is a national nonprofit organization that provides STEM opportunities for young people ages six to eighteen in the United States and impacts more than 615,000 young people around the world each year; and

Whereas, future engineers and inventors from ages six to eight are in teams called FLL Jr (*FIRST* LEGO League Jr), and youth from ages nine to fourteen are FLL, while older students choose between *FIRST* Tech Challenge for seventh through twelfth graders and *FIRST* Robotics Competition for ninth through twelfth graders; and

Whereas, there are over seven thousand ten *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams around the world and forty‑two teams in the State of South Carolina; and

Whereas, ten years of evaluation data document that *FIRST* participants show a significantly higher statistical interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); increased involvement in STEM‑related activities; greater STEM identity; higher levels of STEM knowledge; and greater interest in STEM careers than students who do not participate, and the impact is even greater for female students; and

Whereas, *FIRST* participants are more motivated to do well in school, are more likely to take a challenging math or science course, and show improved problem‑solving, time‑management, conflict‑resolution, and communication skills; and

Whereas, *FIRST* alumni express a greater interest in going to college and are twice as likely to major in science or engineering as other students; and

Whereas, a *FIRST* competition is as close to real‑world engineering as a student can get, combining the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology (the ultimate “sport for the mind”), with participants calling it “the hardest fun you’ll ever have”; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly values the significant impact that *FIRST* has made, as well as the pride and recognition that the members of the Penguineers have brought to the Myrtle Beach community and the entire State, and the members wish the Penguineers much success at the *FIRST* Championship in Houston, Texas. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, commend and recognize the Penguineers, the team that served as captain of the winning alliance at the South Carolina *FIRST* Tech Challenge State Championship for the 2018/19 *FIRST* Robotics season and advanced to the *FIRST* Championship in Houston, Texas.

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