**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE GAFFNEY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM AND COACHES ON THEIR IMPRESSIVE WIN OF THE 2021 CLASS AAAAA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE AND TO CONGRATULATE HEAD COACH DAN JONES ON BEING NAMED COACH OF THE YEAR BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the members of the Gaffney High School varsity football team rose to the occasion on Saturday, December 4, 2021, to claim their first state championship since 2012; and

Whereas, Gaffney fans were treated to a thrilling spectacle beneath the lights at the Charlie W. Johnson Stadium at Benedict College as the Indians defeated Dutch Fork 22‑19, toppling the five‑time defending state champion Silver Foxes, to capture the 2021 South Carolina Class AAAAA State Championship title for the eighteenth time in the program’s storied history; and

Whereas, this season Gaffney had multiple games where they were forced to battle back after being down at halftime. These experiences fortified the Indians’ resolve and assured them, regardless of the circumstances and the current score, to continue fighting for a win until the final whistle. As such, it came as no surprise to Head Coach Dan Jones that his athletes never gave up and pulled themselves back into contention after Dutch Fork started the game with two quick rushing touchdowns and the Indians found themselves down 13‑7 at the end of the first half; and

Whereas, refusing to break under pressure, even as they went down 19‑7 in the fourth quarter, the Indians found their footing once again as senior linebacker Landon Bullock made his second interception of the night and set the team up for a four‑yard rushing touchdown by senior tailback Tyler Smith. It was then that the Indians’ defense truly shined, holding off the Dutch Fork offensive effort and forcing a turnover on downs with just over seven minutes left in the game. Feeling the shift in momentum, the offense stepped up, and with only three and a half minutes left on the clock, Suga Jefferies caught a forty‑yard touchdown pass to give Gaffney a narrow 22‑19 lead. In the end, it was this extraordinary team effort and unyielding resilience in the face of defeat that secured Gaffney’s win over Dutch Fork, who was, at the time, ranked No. 22 in the country in USA TODAY’s Super 25 rankings; and

Whereas, led by Coach Jones, the Gaffney Indians football team, which was heavily laden with seniors, ran a gauntlet of opponents this season and proved their diligence, determination, and work ethic was without parallel as they earned their first undefeated state‑title season since 2006. This game, and the legacy this team has created will continue to be something each of these players, their families, and their community can be proud of for years to come; and

Whereas, after guiding his team to a perfect 15‑0 season and the 2021 Class AAAAA State Championship title, the South Carolina Football Coaches Association named Head Coach Dan Jones Coach of the Year; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives value the pride and recognition that the Gaffney High School Indians have earned for their school and their community and look forward to hearing of their accomplishments in the days ahead. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Gaffney High School Football Team and Coaches on their impressive win of the 2021 Class AAAAA State Championship title and to congratulate Head Coach Dan Jones for being named Coach of the Year by the South Carolina Football Coaches Association.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Principal Erik Gerstenacker and Head Coach Dan Jones.

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