**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2009 AS GANG AWARENESS MONTH IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN ORDER TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE INCREASING PROBLEM OF CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY IN OUR STATE.

Whereas, criminal gang activity has been on the rise in the State of South Carolina for more than ten years; and

Whereas, according to state law enforcement authorities, now present in the State are numerous gangs, among them 18th Street, Almighty Latin Kings and Queens, Crips, Bloods, G 27, Gangster Disciples, Folk and People Nations, Nuestra Familia, Brothers of Struggle, Mara Salvatrucha, Vice Lords, and Aryan Brotherhood; and

Whereas, since one of the primary functions of government is the promotion of public safety, the General Assembly desires to promote public safety for the citizens of our State in part by focusing on the problem of criminal gangs; and

Whereas, since government cannot do this job alone, parents and the general public, as well as members of the General Assembly, law enforcement authorities, and school officials, need to be educated on the issue of gang violence and other criminal gang activities in order to help deter our young citizens from becoming members of criminal gangs; and

Whereas, during the month of October, faith‑based and public‑safety community organizations, along with other local groups, will provide services, programs, outreach, and various activities to help address this need and make a difference in the lives of children and their families; and

Whereas, the faith‑based community includes more than seventy churches, led by the Honorable John L. Scott, Jr., Dr. Michael Ross, Dr. Tommie Brown, Dr. Charles Graham, Reverend John Williams, and Reverend Eddie Davis; and

Whereas, the citizens of South Carolina are urged to support individuals, law enforcement authorities, and organizations that are effectively working in this arena, such as Project GO “Gang Out”, which identifies potential and existing gang members who are interested in leaving a gang and teaches them and their families how to explore positive alternatives that do not include gang life. 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, declare the month of October 2009 as Gang Awareness Month in South Carolina in order to raise public awareness of the increasing problem of criminal gang activity in our State.

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