**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE HAMMOND SCHOOL WESTERN EQUESTRIAN TEAM, COACH, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR A SUPERB SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR GARNERING THE 2013 SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in its deliberations to honor the members of the Hammond School Western equestrian team of Richland County who captured the school’s fourth Western state title in only four years on March 9, 2013; and

Whereas, a style of horseback riding which grew from ranching and warfare traditions brought to the Americas by Spanish conquistadors, Western riding trains the horse to change direction with light pressure of a rein against the horse’s neck, or neck rein, and to exercise some independence in using its natural instincts, developing a deep, secure seat and very light rein contact; and

Whereas, reining requires horse and rider to perform a precise pattern consisting of circles at a lope and gallop with flying changes of lead; rapid spins, turns in one spot on the haunches; rollbacks, rapid turns immediately followed by a gallop in the opposite direction; and the crowd‑pleasing, sliding stop, executed from a full gallop; and

Whereas, Western horsemanship competitions are judged at the walk, jog, and lope in both directions, and riders must sit to the jog and never post; and

Whereas, the Hammond Western team consists of only nine members: tenth-graders Sara Stuart, Millie Chen, and Chelsea Chen; ninth graders Seth Watkins, Claire Darnall, and Ellerslie McCue; eighth-grader Laney Pound; and sixth-grader Claire Pound and Piper Meeker; and

Whereas, in spite of the show standards that mix students from all grade levels in competition, the Hammond middle school equestrians took one championship, one reserve championship, and five third places, even though the riders compete in only two classes of the four represented in each show; and

Whereas, exchange students from China, twin sisters, Millie and Chelsea Chen are the two newest riders on the high school team, who both rode in China but found the horsemanship discipline and the barn environment at Hammond noticeably different from their experiences; and

Whereas, since organizing in 2008, the team has qualified for Nationals each year, winning many individual and team titles at the National level, including two Middle School National Reserve Champions, and the team will return to Nationals in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, this summer where the high school will represent Hammond as a team and four riders will show as individuals; and

Whereas, a native of Hopkins with experience riding and showing horses on the local, state, and national levels, Joy McMillion has served as the team’s head coach since its inception in 2008 and has taken the team to nationals every year; and

Whereas, in a sport requiring precision, control, and athleticism, Coach McMillion used her own equestrian ability and training to hone a championship team and teach these riders lessons that will be worthwhile throughout life both in and out of the arena; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are grateful for the distinction and respect that the Hammond School Western equestrian riders have brought to their school and their community and expect to hear of their repeated success in the future. 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 commend the Hammond School Western equestrian team, coach, and school officials for a superb season and congratulate them for garnering the 2013 South Carolina Independent School Association State Championship title.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Headmaster Christopher B. Angel and Coach Joy McMillion.

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