**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE SOUTH CAROLINA AUTISM SOCIETY FOR ITS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND OTHERS WHO ARE AFFECTED BY AUTISM AND TO DECLARE APRIL 2016 AS “AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH” IN THE PALMETTO STATE.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the members of the Senate should pause in their deliberations to express their appreciation for the significant contributions of the South Carolina Autism Society, which serves those who are affected by autism; and

Whereas, when a group of dedicated parents of children with autism gathered together for fellowship in the early 1970’s, they realized how little was known about autism and recognized that children with autism have their own set of special needs; and

Whereas, at the time, services for children with autism were nonexistent or inappropriate, and these parents raised their voices to improve life in South Carolina for individuals with autism and for their families; and

Whereas, their diligent work and grassroots efforts formed what is now the South Carolina Autism Society, chartered by the State of South Carolina in 1972, and the organization received eleemosynary status from the Internal Revenue Service in 1974; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Autism Society provides assistance, education, services, and resources to improve the lives of individuals affected by autism and is the only statewide organization advocating for children and adults with autism-spectrum disorders and their families; and

Whereas, all funds raised by the organization stay in South Carolina to ensure that the nearly seventy thousand individuals living in the State with autism-spectrum disorders have opportunities to achieve a quality of life comparable to their peers; and

Whereas, services provided by the South Carolina Autism Society include providing information to parents and professionals about autism and available services; connecting individuals with autism-spectrum disorders to resources and services in the community through the work of the organization’s case managers; assisting children with autism in receiving the best education possible by building relationships between the school and the parents through the society’s Parent-School Partnership program; offering free workshops and training programs for families, self-advocates, and professionals; and providing respite activities throughout the year for families; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate value the dedicated work of the South Carolina Autism Society and the substantial and meaningful benefit the organization brings to those with autism in our State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor the South Carolina Autism Society for its outstanding service to children and others who are affected by autism and declare April 2016 as “Autism Awareness Month” in the Palmetto State.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the South Carolina Autism Society.

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