**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE STRATFORD HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY SOFTBALL TEAM, COACHES, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR AN OUTSTANDING SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR WINNING THE 2016 SOUTH CAROLINA CLASS AAAA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the members of the Stratford High School softball team of Berkeley County took top honors at the state competition held at University of South Carolina’s Beckham Field on Saturday, May 21, 2016; and

Whereas, to the delight of their loyal and exuberant fans, the Stratford Knights routed the Byrnes High School Rebels 3‑2 in the third game of the best‑of‑three series, twenty years after winning the team’s first state championship; and

Whereas, on the mound, the Knight’s senior pitcher Nikki Linthicum retired the first fourteen batters she faced in the final game, throwing a complete game four‑hitter, and at the plate, she drove in two of her team’s runs; and

Whereas, with a pair of hits and a Byrnes error, Kat Tate posted a run for the Knights at the top of the first inning when Chloe Pelham hit a grounder to second base; and

Whereas, in the top of the fifth inning, Nikki Linthicum drilled a hit to the centerfield wall to bring in Haley Newell and Kat Tate for a two‑run triple for Stratford; and

Whereas, in the bottom of the fifth, the Rebels loaded the bases with a pair of walks and a single under the cloud of two outs before Stratford’s Chloe Pelham ended the threat with a running catch in foul territory near the dugout; and

Whereas, a two‑run home run by Byrnes in the sixth inning closed the lead to 3‑2, but the Knights averted all other attempts to tie the game; and

Whereas, in a sport that demands strength, strategy, and quickness, Knight seniors Nikki Linthicum, Skye Moore, Emily Harmon, and Lyzzie Hilton ended their high school careers with a 24‑12 season and a state championship to secure their names in the South Carolina High School League history books; and

Whereas, the Knights were led to their second state crown by legendary Head Coach Debra Tolar, who is retiring after twenty‑eight years with the Knights and 728 victories, making her the second‑winningest softball coach in state history. Coach Tolar and her skilled coaching staff capitalized on their own athletic experience and training to build a championship‑caliber team and teach these athletes lessons that will prove invaluable through life both on and off the diamond; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives appreciate the pride and recognition that the Stratford softball players have brought to their school and their community and look to hear of their continued achievements 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 Stratford High School varsity softball team, coaches, and school officials for an outstanding season and congratulate them for winning the 2016 South Carolina Class AAAA State Championship title.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Principal Heather Taylor and Coach Debra Tolar.

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