**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND CELEBRATE DR. JEFF PRIEST ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN ON JUNE 30, 2018, AND TO WISH HIM MUCH SUCCESS AND CONTINUED HAPPINESS IN HIS FUTURE.

Whereas, Dr. Jeff Priest will retire from the University of South Carolina Aiken on June 30, 2018, after over thirty years of service; and

Whereas, Dr. Priest has served the university in several capacities, but most recently as the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA) and provost. He was the first individual to serve in the enhanced EVCAA position, which was restructured to reflect the provost model requested by the university during strategic planning in 2012. His portfolio of responsibilities expanded to include the offices that directly support academics, as well as the schools and colleges on campus. For the past six years, Dr. Priest has served in this critical position, providing steady, principled leadership for faculty and academic staff, in addition to wise counsel and valued input on the cabinet; and

Whereas, during his tenure at USC Aiken, Dr. Priest established the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center, enhancing science and technology education for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Originally, the idea was to renovate a storage shed, but his efforts ultimately helped create a state‑of‑art educational facility, which today attracts approximately eighty thousand visitors each year. He has secured more than twenty‑two million dollars in grants for the university, and as EVCAA, he supported the creation of engaging and relevant academic programs, enhanced student support, and championed students’ academic success; and

Whereas, in addition to helping create and build the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center, Dr. Priest routinely sought ways to make use of the scientific and mathematical skills of local businesses in the schools. One example of this focus was the Visiting Scientist program, which made great use of scientists and engineers in local schools to support curricula in those areas. He also helped initiate an innovative program that makes lesson‑based kits available to teachers across the region, free of charge. This program enables schools without sufficient support for laboratory supplies to provide the same sorts of classroom and hands‑on experiences that their peers in more affluent schools receive; and

Whereas, Dr. Priest shepherded several new programs into the USC Aiken repertoire based on current and anticipated regional workforce needs. Partnering with community business leaders and industry experts, he has created coalitions to help shape educational programs that will prepare USC Aiken graduates for the workforce of today; and

Whereas, under Dr. Priest’s leadership as the EVCAA, USC Aiken has continued its streak of being recognized as the premier institution in its category by “U.S. News and World Report.” Additionally, the school is designated as South Carolina’s only institution of the Council on Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), thanks in large part to Dr. Priest’s efforts towards receiving and maintaining this coveted distinction; and

Whereas, furthermore, Dr. Priest helped create the Veteran and Military Student Success Center (VMSS) on campus. This vital team provides holistic support to veteran and military students working to achieve their academic goals. The VMSS has grown exponentially and has received numerous national and military accolades since it was first established a few years ago; and

Whereas, with a thirty year career marked by success, Dr. Priest’s accomplishments over the course of his tenure become too numerous to list. True to his humble nature, he will be the first to say that any success enjoyed and accomplishments achieved are due to the collaboration and hard work of colleagues. While he won’t take any credit, he leaves a tremendous legacy, making an indelible mark on the institution. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, honor and celebrate Dr. Jeff Priest on the occasion of his retirement from the University of South Carolina Aiken on June 30, 2018, and to wish him much continued success and happiness in his future.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Jeff Priest.

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