**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE SEPTEMBER AS “HUNGER ACTION MONTH” IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, “Hunger Action Month” provides a unified opportunity for communities in the United States to focus their attention on the persistent problem of domestic hunger and on creating a movement to help end hunger in America; and

Whereas, in 2016, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, 115.4% of households in the United States were food insecure. Many in United States’ households frequently skip meals or eat too little, even going without food for days at a time; and

Whereas, hunger is a reality for 18.5% of South Carolinians, too, or nearly one in five. In 2016, according to a study published by Feeding America, 794,590 South Carolinians did not always know where they would find their next meal; and

Whereas, food insecurity negatively affects individuals across a spectrum of ages. Research shows that preschool and school-age children who experience severe hunger have higher levels of chronic illness, anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems; and

Whereas, food insecure seniors have a lower nutrient intake than food secure seniors. Without proper nutrients, seniors are at an increased risk of disability, deteriorated health conditions, decreased resistance to infections, lengthened hospital stays, deteriorated mental health, and becoming underweight; and

Whereas, for families caught in the squeeze between declining wages and an increase in the costs of other essentials, such as home heating, gasoline, housing, and medical care, the food budget becomes a frequent pressure point; and

Whereas, emergency food assistance is a way for individuals and families to keep food on the table while still paying the bills; and

Whereas, in 2014, according to Feeding America, one in seven individuals in the United States accessed emergency food from a food pantry one or more times; and

Whereas, individuals, charities, businesses, and government all have a role to play in getting food to those in need; and

Whereas, food banks, including those who are members of the South Carolina Food Bank Association; soup kitchens; food pantries; faith-based organizations; businesses; and individuals raise funds and donate time and food to help their neighbors; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Food Bank Association, as members of Feeding America, provides guidance, support, and vital food resources to over 1,600 agencies, working to close the ongoing need for services by leveraging local community partnerships. The association provides an average of five meals for every dollar of support and saves taxpayers $21.32 through each hour of volunteer service; and

Whereas, the four member agencies of the South Carolina Food Bank Association provided approximately 85,199,962 meals in the most recently completed year; and

Whereas, individuals benefiting from the availability of donated food range from infants, toddlers, school-age children, and adolescents to single mothers, single fathers, two-parent families, veterans and their families, and seniors. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize September as “Hunger Action Month” in the State of South Carolina.

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