**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE MONDAY, MAY 1, THROUGH FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2017, AS CHARTER SCHOOL WEEK IN THE PALMETTO STATE AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING THE CHILDREN OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN INNOVATIVE CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS.

Whereas, in the 2016‑2017 academic year, seventy charter schools are serving students across South Carolina, thereby helping create new jobs and opportunities for educators and other professionals in South Carolina. Charter schools, which are public schools, increase learning opportunities for all pupils and provide parents and students with expanded choices within the public school system; and

Whereas, forty‑four states and the District of Columbia have charter schools. In South Carolina, our seventy charter schools serve more than thirty‑two thousand students; and

Whereas, the Palmetto State passed the South Carolina Charter School Act in 1996, and the first established charter schools opened their doors in 1998; and

Whereas, many charter schools are designed specifically to serve children from traditionally underserved communities. These schools have made dramatic gains in accelerating the closing of the achievement gap for underserved populations, resulting in an increase in the graduation rate and improvement in college readiness; and

Whereas, charter schools offer a variety of innovative learning environments, including college preparedness, alternative education campuses, career technical education, arts, and sciences; and

Whereas, charter schools play an integral role in South Carolina’s public education system, the communities in which they operate, the families they serve, and the pupils’ lives they impact; and

Whereas, by providing high‑quality education to students, charter schools contribute to the statewide effort to improve education in 2017, and they encourage community and parental involvement in the education of our youth. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, declare Monday, May 1, through Friday, May 5, 2017, as Charter School Week in the Palmetto State and acknowledge the importance of educating the children of South Carolina in innovative classrooms and schools.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Molly Spearman, state superintendent of education; Don McLaurin, chairman of the South Carolina Public Charter School District Board of Directors; and Mary Carmichael, executive director of the Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina.

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