**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND CELEBRATE THE HISTORIC GATHERING OF THE AME, AME ZION, AND CME CHURCHES IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, ON MARCH 1-3, 2010.

Whereas, on March 1, 2010, a historic event in the modern‑day annals of American religion will take place. For the first time in more than 45 years, the three major Methodist denominations within the African-American community will meet collectively at the Carolina Coliseum in Columbia, South Carolina; and

Whereas, over a three‑day period (March 1‑3, 2010), congregations from the African Methodist Episcopal (AME), African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion), and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Churches will convene in Columbia to discuss and address some of the major issues currently plaguing our nation; and

Whereas, the “Great Gathering” in Columbia will attract 12,000 attendees and seeks to combine the congregational, social, political, and spiritual strengths of the three African-American Methodist denominations whose collective histories date back more than 215 years and whose aggregate congregants currently total more than 7 million; and

Whereas, one of the most pressing issues recognized by organizers of the “Great Gathering” is the “State and Condition of the African American Male”; and

Whereas, nationwide, there are a number of national mentoring and self‑help programs designed to assist and motivate African-American males in a positive fashion. There are also a litany of local and regional programs and initiatives aimed at turning black youth around to the benefit of the community; and

Whereas, however, to date, there has not been a nationwide effort created and implemented by one of the most influential and powerful segments of the African-American community, the church. Such a movement to address the many issues affecting and influencing black men would indeed have a major impact; and

Whereas, the development of such an initiative, targeting African-American males from age 12 to 25 years old, is one of the major goals that the AME, AME Zion, and CME Churches hope to accomplish during the historic meeting; and

Whereas, the possible approach and elements of the initiative can be developed prior to and during the “Great Gathering” and ultimately implemented by the AME, AME Zion, and CME Churches collectively, and based on the critical and widespread needs of this initiative, the churches are seeking support from willing corporate, government, and non‑profit partners; and

Whereas, the “Great Gathering” in itself has true historic implications for the African-American community. Yet the real impact will be realized in the months and years to come, when more young African-American men can be guided and assisted in becoming positive and productive members of our community. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the General Assembly, by this resolution, honor and celebrate the historic gathering of the AME, AME Zion, and CME Churches in Columbia on March 1-3, 2010.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the headquarters of the AME, AME Zion, and CME Churches.

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