**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEND BENEDICT COLLEGE FOR HOSTING THE “2010 TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT: CAREERS AND DISTRACTED DRIVING” ON MARCH 25, 2010, AND TO ENCOURAGE OTHER SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO COOPERATE WITH LIKE‑MINDED ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES TO HEIGHTEN PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CONCERNING THE ISSUE OF DISTRACTED‑DRIVER LEGISLATION.

Whereas, creating jobs and workforce‑development opportunities and improving transportation safety, including the reduction of fatalities and injuries, are goals of both the federal government and the State of South Carolina; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, South Carolina Department of Public Safety, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration are responsible for maintaining a transportation planning process for the State of South Carolina that includes strategies and recommendations for the improvement of job creation, workforce development, and transportation safety and planning; and

Whereas, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) calculates that motor vehicle crashes cost Americans approximately two hundred thirty billion dollars annually in economic damages; and

Whereas, NHTSA and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) estimate that nearly eighty percent of crashes and sixty‑five percent of near‑crashes involve some form of driver inattention; and

Whereas, NHTSA and VTTI estimate that driver distraction is a factor in approximately 4.78 million crashes, resulting in two million injuries, more than thirty‑four thousand fatalities, and as much as one hundred eighty‑four billion dollars in economic damages annually; and

Whereas, VTTI found cell phones to be the most common cause of driver distraction; and

Whereas, a university study found that college students face a crash risk eight times greater when texting than when not texting; and

Whereas, VTTI found that truck drivers face a crash risk or near‑crash risk twenty‑three times greater when texting than when not texting; and

Whereas, the American Media Association called text messaging while driving “a public health risk,” citing a study that found text messaging while driving causes a four hundred percent increase in time spent with eyes off the road; and

Whereas, Benedict College, the Federal Highway Administration, South Carolina Department of Public Safety, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, AT&T, Dennis Corporation, State Farm Insurance Companies, and United Infrastructure Group have come together to address job creation, workforce development, high‑risk travel behavior, and user groups as a result of aggressive and distracted driving; and

Whereas, South Carolina has made significant progress towards developing distracted‑driver legislation, especially legislation to prohibit text messaging while driving. To facilitate further progress, colleges and universities should participate with other like‑minded agencies in education, insurance, law enforcement, nonprofit work, policy, technology, and transportation to increase public awareness and education about the importance of this issue. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, commend Benedict College for hosting the “2010 Transportation Summit: Careers and Distracted Driving” on March 25, 2010, and encourage other South Carolina colleges and universities to cooperate with like‑minded organizations and agencies to heighten public awareness and education concerning the issue of distracted‑driver legislation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. David H. Swinton, President, and Mrs. Vareva Evans‑Harris, Director of Scholarships and Transportation Programs, of Benedict College.

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