**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE HONORABLE WILLIAM R. BYARS, JR., WHO WAS HONORED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ON APRIL 20, 2010, AS A STATE CHAMPION FOR HIS SUPPORT OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS.

Whereas, the National Afterschool Alliance & National AfterSchool Association honored the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Director, Judge William R. Byars, Jr., as a state champion for his support of afterschool programs at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C.; and

Whereas, Judge Byars was honored for his tireless work on behalf of DJJ’s Teen After School Centers (TASC) which began in 2002 to primarily serve at‑risk youth and those youth currently involved with the juvenile justice system; and

Whereas, Governor Mark Sanford appointed former Family Court Judge William R. Byars, Jr., as the Director of the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice in January 2003. Judge Byars oversees a staff of 1,500, and DJJ serves approximately 20,000 juveniles annually; and

Whereas, prior to this position, Judge Byars served as Director of the Children’s Law Office at the University of South Carolina School of Law and as Family Court Judge for the Fifth Judicial Circuit from 1989 to August 1999. He resigned his judgeship to assume the position with the Children’s Law Office and work full time on legal issues involving children and families; and

Whereas, from 1994‑1998 he served as an executive committee member of South Carolina’s Families for Kids, working for child welfare reform. He served as the Chair of the Governor’s Task Force on Juvenile Justice from 1995‑1999 and as President of the South Carolina Conference of Family Court Judges from 1995‑1996; and

Whereas, from 1995‑1999 he served on the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice. He served as Co‑Chair of the South Carolina Truancy Task Force and chaired the South Carolina Underage Drinking Task Force. He Co‑Chaired the Blue Ribbon Task Force of the South Carolina Fatherhood Policy Project Office and serves on the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Advisory Council; and

Whereas, among his honors and awards are the Champion for Children Award from the Alliance for South Carolina’s Children in 1998 and awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner for “Outstanding Leadership and Service in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect” in 1996 and 1998. In 1999 Judge Byars received South Carolina’s highest civilian award: “The Order of the Palmetto” from the Governor for “leadership in juvenile justice and children’s law reform.” In 2000 he received a special award from the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys for “Extraordinary Commitment to the Welfare of Children.” The South Carolina Council on Adoptable Children presented the Judge a Lifetime Achievement Award in April 2002. Then, he received the Governor and Mrs. Richard W. Riley Award for Excellence in Dropout Prevention in February of 2004 from The National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University; and

Whereas, two of his most recent awards were both received in April of 2008: the Kappy Hubbard Voices for Children Award presented by the Voices for South Carolina’s Children, Prevent Child Abuse South Carolina, and the Children’s Trust Fund of South Carolina; and the prestigious A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award presented by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice; and

Whereas, Judge Byars has spoken in over half of the states at conferences on legal issues involving children and families. He has also appeared as a commentator on numerous news shows and in foundation documentaries on children and family issues; and

Whereas, Judge Byars received a B.A. in Government from Louisiana State University and a J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law. He is a Vietnam Veteran where he was a Military Intelligence Officer and was awarded the Army Commendation and the Bronze Star Medals; and

Whereas, prior to his time on the bench he was a partner in the law firm of Savage, Royall, Sheheen and Byars in Camden, South Carolina. He was serving as Chairman of the Kershaw County School Board at the time of his election to the bench; and

Whereas, it is fitting and proper for the members of the Senate to pause in their deliberations to recognize the many good works of this fine South Carolinian. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Judge William Byars who was honored in Washington, D.C. on April 20, 2010, as a state champion for his support of afterschool programs.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Judge William Byars.

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