**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND JOHN D. BAKER OF COLUMBIA FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND TO CONGRATULATE HIM ON RECEIVING THE 2011 UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD.

Whereas, it is with great pleasure that the members of the South Carolina Senate honor individuals who freely give of their time and resources for the good of others, especially those who need it most; and

Whereas, John D. Baker of Columbia, an exemplary volunteer worker for many years in his community, has contributed untold hours of valuable volunteer service to the citizens of the Midlands and is thereby worthy of great praise; and

Whereas, giving back runs in the family for John Baker. His father, David, chaired the Columbia United Committees Fund Drive (the predecessor to the United Way). Shortly after attending a ceremony honoring his father, John Baker got involved with March of Dimes, with which he continues his involvement to this day. At the March of Dimes National Volunteer Leadership Conference, he was selected to receive the Elaine Whitelaw Award, the highest honor ever bestowed on a March of Dimes volunteer; and

Whereas, Mr. Baker was one of the first supporters of the new Chabad Labovitch movement, which now runs a successful Jewish Day School in Columbia. He also served on the Richland County Public Library Board of Trustees, and after his chairmanship the library was named 2001 Library of the Year by the American Library Association. In 2000, John Baker received the Trustee of the Year award given by the South Carolina Association of Public Library Administrators. Later, he and his family helped bring Maurice Sendak, best known for *Where the Wild Things Are*, to the library; and

Whereas, very involved with United Way of the Midlands initiatives, Mr. Baker has been helping to create funding for the Early Childhood Initiative, Vital Connections. He also formed Step Into Reading to raise money for books and put them into the hands of needy children. For all his work with this program, he accepted the Corporate Citizen of the Year award from the Carolinas Chapter of Volunteers of America in 2001; and

Whereas, his achievements don’t stop there. The State of Israel Bonds in Columbia honored Mr. Baker in 2002 with the State of Israel’s Ben Gurion Award for his years of service. He was also awarded the State of South Carolina’s highest honor, the Order of the Palmetto, by Governor James Hodges. In addition, Mr. Baker received the Philanthropist of the Year award given by the state chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals; and

Whereas, Mr. Baker finds his strongest encouragement in the support of his family, his wife, the former Marcie Stern; and his daughter, Gabrielle, a junior at George Washington University; and

Whereas, in grateful acknowledgement of his contributions to the citizens of the Columbia area, John D. Baker has been named 2011 United Way of the Midlands Humanitarian of the Year. On March 1, 2012, he formally will be presented with the award during the annual Humanitarian of the Year awards ceremony; and

Whereas, this honor, which recognizes individuals who have shown extraordinary leadership in philanthropy and human services and who have made a major impact on changing and improving conditions for Midlands residents, is a fitting tribute to an exemplary humanitarian with a high dedication to his calling equaling the eminence of the award; and

Whereas, the members of the Senate recognize that the success of the State of South Carolina, the strength of its communities, and the vitality of American society as a whole depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of individuals like John D. Baker, who use their talents and resources to serve others. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and commend John D. Baker of Columbia for his many years of outstanding community service, and congratulate him on receiving the 2011 United Way of the Midlands Humanitarian of the Year award.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to John D. Baker.

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