**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE C. EARL HUNTER, FORMER COMMISSIONER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT, TO COMMEND HIM FOR THIRTY‑TWO YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT STATE, AND TO WISH HIM CONTINUED SUCCESS AND FULFILLMENT IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate has learned that C. Earl Hunter, former commissioner of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), began a well‑deserved retirement on February 1, 2012, after thirty‑two years of distinguished service to the people of the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, a lifelong South Carolinian hailing from the town of Heath Springs, Mr. Hunter, in preparation for his life’s work, earned a bachelor’s degree in marine biology from the University of South Carolina in 1979. In 1980, he joined DHEC as a water quality inspector in Myrtle Beach and in 1985 earned a master’s degree in business administration from Webster University; and

Whereas, in 1984, Mr. Hunter accepted a post at DHEC’s Columbia headquarters, where he rose through the ranks and in 2001 was appointed to the position of agency commissioner. In that capacity, he championed improvements to the state’s public health provider systems through his service as chair of the Pediatric Advisory Committee, the OB Task Force, and the Elimination of Health Disparities Committee; and

Whereas, under Mr. Hunter’s leadership, DHEC has seen its labors result in a steady overall decrease in the state’s infant mortality rate, a decrease in wait times for birth and death certificates, streamlining of the state’s Certificate of Need program, development of a public health preparedness program that successfully coordinated major emergency response efforts during the massive train derailment and resultant chlorine spill in Graniteville, and numerous other achievements; and

Whereas, Earl Hunter also served as state health officer for South Carolina in the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). He was elected ASTHO secretary‑treasurer in 2010 and served the organization in numerous other capacities over the years; and

Whereas, in recognition of his dedicated service, ASTHO honored Mr. Hunter with its Presidential Meritorious Service Award, and Governor Nikki Haley bestowed on Mr. Hunter the Order of the Palmetto, the State of South Carolina’s highest civilian award; and

Whereas, the Senate is grateful for the legacy of consistent commitment and excellence that Earl Hunter has given in his service to the people of South Carolina. The members take great pleasure in wishing him well as he enters retirement and trust he will find much enjoyment in the more leisurely pace of the days ahead. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate C. Earl Hunter, former commissioner of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, upon the occasion of his retirement, commend him for thirty‑two years of dedicated service to the citizens of this great State, and wish him continued success and fulfillment in all his future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to C. Earl Hunter.

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