**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2011, YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO ENCOURAGE ALL CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT STATE TO PROMOTE STRONG FAMILIES AND PARENTING, ALONG WITH YOUTH PROGRAMS AND JOBS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly recognize that children are our most precious state resource and hold in their collective body the future of our beloved State; and

Whereas, young people today face a multitude of struggles with destructive powers in modern society, such as the use of illicit drugs; a rise in teen pregnancy; gang violence; increasing teen criminal activity, including dating violence; tragic youth suicide; far‑reaching health issues; and an unacceptably high school dropout rate; and

Whereas, sources suggest that dating violence affects one in four youths, and the use of illegal drugs and under‑age drinking reportedly occur in over fifty percent of high school students; and

Whereas, the American Academy of Pediatrics explains that the rise in youth suicide stems from the ease of procuring tools for suicide, the greater pressures of modern life, difficult academic competition, and a proliferation of violence in the media; and

Whereas, in addition to mental and emotional health concerns, today’s youth face physical health dangers such as sexually transmitted disease, obesity, eating disorders, and lack of physical fitness; and

Whereas, adding to their already‑alarming physical danger, the rising practice among youth of texting while driving gives great concern. The American Media Association called text messaging while driving “a public health risk,” and a university study found that college students face a crash risk eight times greater when texting than when not texting; and

Whereas, our youth are increasingly uneducated, even illiterate, as a result of an alarmingly steep school dropout rate, and are, as well, sadly unaware and uninformed in many life-skill areas, such as financial literacy; and

Whereas, the resources of our communities and State can combat the forces that assail our young people, and after-school programs that strengthen their emotional and moral constitution should be encouraged and promoted; and

Whereas, youth jobs also can be provided by local businesses, where young people can be mentored and learn the satisfaction and self-worth derived from gainful employment; and

Whereas, most importantly, the Palmetto State recognizes the importance of positive family influence in the lives of young people and the critical need for strong, loving parenting; and

Whereas, knowing our great responsibility to posterity, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly desire to promote the welfare of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, declare the month of September 2011, Youth Awareness Month in South Carolina and encourage all citizens of this great State to promote strong families and parenting, along with youth programs and jobs.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑