**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR SUGAR RAY LEONARD, WORLD BOXING CHAMPION AND HEALTH ADVOCATE, AND TO EXTEND TO HIM A CORDIAL WELCOME TO THE PALMETTO STATE UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS ADDRESS TO THE EIGHTH ANNUAL GREENVILLE HEALTH SYSTEM MINORITY HEALTH SUMMIT ON APRIL 12, 2014.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is pleased to learn that Sugar Ray Leonard, world boxing champion and health advocate, will travel to the Palmetto State on April 12, 2014, as keynote speaker for the Eighth Annual Greenville Health System (GHS) Minority Health Summit; and

Whereas, at the summit, to be held at the TD Convention Center in Greenville, Mr. Leonard will deliver remarks focused on the power to win over cancer and will participate in a meet‑and‑greet for summit attendees; and

Whereas, born May 17, 1956, in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Sugar Ray Leonard was destined to become one of boxing’s most beloved and successful fighters. He was named Ray Charles Leonard by his parents, Cicero and Gertha Leonard, after his mother’s favorite singer, Ray Charles. The young Ray Charles Leonard grew up in a loving home in Palmer Park, Maryland; and

Whereas, his brothers, who were dabbling in boxing, convinced him to visit the local community center and strap on some gloves. His life would never be the same again. Soon, he became obsessed with boxing and with perfecting his skills in the sport; and

Whereas, the fledgling fighter was quick, deft, and eager to learn, and in 1973 his hard work started to pay off. He won the National Golden Gloves that year, and a year later he was crowned the national Amateur Athletic Union champion; and

Whereas, at first, he fought like Joe Frazier‑‑he would “come in low, bob and weave”‑‑and he knocked out many opponents with that game plan. He straightened out when he saw Muhammad Ali and started studying Sugar Ray Robinson. In fact, Ray Charles Leonard’s reverence for Robinson ran so deep that he eventually took the nickname “Sugar Ray,” which stuck; and

Whereas, over the course of his successful amateur career, Sugar Ray Leonard won three National Golden Gloves titles, two AAU championships, and the 1975 Pan American title. At the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada, he vaulted to celebrity status by overcoming severe hand injuries to win the gold medal in the light‑welterweight (139‑pound) division; and

Whereas, as a pro, Leonard matched the same success he’d had as an amateur. In November 1979, he won the World Boxing Council’s welterweight title, and over the next decade he fought in some of boxing’s most memorable matches, winning nearly all of them, including wins over Roberto Duran and Thomas Hearns; and

Whereas, in 1987, Sugar Ray upset “Marvelous” Marvin Hagler for the middleweight crown. To this day, the match is widely considered one of the greatest fights in boxing history. In 1997, Sugar Ray retired from boxing, finishing his pro boxing career with a 36‑3‑1 record and 25 knockouts. Later that year, he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, in admiration of his career both then and now, the Senate extends to Sugar Ray Leonard a warm welcome to South Carolina and wishes him an enjoyable visit to our State as he speaks at the Eighth Annual GHS Minority Health Summit. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, honor Sugar Ray Leonard, world boxing champion and health advocate, and extend to him a cordial welcome to the Palmetto State upon the occasion of his address to the Eighth Annual Greenville Health System Minority Health Summit on April 12, 2014.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Sugar Ray Leonard.

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