**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO CALL UPON THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE’S DECISION TO ALLOW WOMEN INTO DIRECT COMBAT ROLES.

Whereas, on January 24, 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that the Obama administration would allow women to be placed in positions that will expose them more directly to fighting with enemy ground forces. According to the announcement, this will allow women to fill hundreds of thousands of combat roles from which they are currently excluded; and

Whereas, the decision‑making process used to bring about this change is deeply flawed and is ideologically rather than militarily based; and

Whereas, since the inception of the War on Terror following the 9/11 attacks, there has been an increased combat role for women in the armed forces. According to recent accounts, more than 800 women have been wounded and more than 130 have died while engaged in fighting with the enemy. Undoubtedly, women have fought honorably, bravely and with great distinction during these conflicts. The greater inclusion of women has allowed our armed forces to tap into an enormous pool of talent and character, and as these casualty figures indicate, the current policy prohibiting female soldiers from serving in combat roles has not lead to the sheltering of our female soldiers from enemy contact; and

Whereas, under the new Department of Defense policy, women may be placed in infantry and Special Forces battalions and other front line combat units. To doubt the wisdom of this action does not reflect on the courage or abilities of female service members, but this action does call for greater deliberation and public debate; and

Whereas, this decision seems more closely akin to a vast social experiment testing a hypothesis that may impair the military effectiveness of our ground forces. The positions that may be opened to female soldiers are in our infantry and Special Forces units. The purpose of these units is to directly and physically engage enemy forces. These units can often be deployed in prolonged operations that can last for months, taking a constant and wearing physical toll; and

Whereas, during direct combat operations there is typically no access to a base of operations or facilities, living conditions can be abysmal and base, and there is routinely no privacy or ability to maintain personal hygiene for extended periods; and

Whereas, a direct combat environment that contains males and females will place a tremendous burden on combat commanders. Not only will commanders have to maintain their focus on defeating the enemy in battle, they will have to do so in an environment that combines life‑threatening danger with underlying sexual tensions and the effect of the chivalric instinct of male soldiers to protect their female counterparts; and

Whereas, the furtherance of the Obama Administration’s Agenda of Change does not justify the substantial risk this decision will pose to our women and men in uniform; and

Whereas, the Constitution gives the Congress the power to shape and structure the military, and a change to the structure of our armed forces as comprehensive as the one proposed now should be endorsed by the Congress of the United States. Therefore, no action should be taken to implement this policy until Congress clearly determines that this change is in the best interest of our Armed Forces and the male and female service members who will be forced to live with the consequences.

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 recognize and commend the honor and valor of the women of our armed forces who have performed with distinction while engaged in ever increasing instances of fighting with the enemy, but call upon the members of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation to recognize the deeply flawed purpose and effect of the Administration’s move to integrate women into direct combat operations, and ask the members to take whatever action is necessary to prevent the implementation of this unsound and ill-considered policy.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the members of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑