**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE DIRE EFFECTS OF LUPUS ON ITS SUFFERERS AND THEIR NEED FOR PROPER MEDICAL TREATMENT AND TO OBSERVE MAY 2015 AS “LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, a chronic, autoimmune disease, lupus can damage any part of the body, including skin, joints, and organs. Because it is chronic, the signs and symptoms tend to last longer than six weeks and often for many years; and

Whereas, lupus affects the immune system, the part of the body that fights off viruses, bacteria, and germs. Normally the production of proteins called antibodies by the immune system protects the body from these invaders. Autoimmune means the immune system cannot tell the difference between these foreign invaders and the body’s healthy tissues and creates autoantibodies that attack and destroy healthy tissue, causing inflammation, pain, and damage in various parts of the body; and

Whereas, although it is not contagious, lupus causes its sufferers to experience flares and remissions of the symptoms as the immune system has bouts of over activity and then normalcy; and

Whereas, lupus, one of the world’s cruelest, most unpredictable, and devastating diseases, can range from mild to life‑threatening, but with good medical care, most lupus sufferers can lead a full life; and

Whereas, research estimates that at least 1.5 million Americans have lupus although the actual number may be higher. It is believed that five million people throughout the world have a form of lupus; and

Whereas, more than sixteen thousand new cases of lupus are reported annually across the United States; and

Whereas, most lupus cases develop in people between the ages of 15 and 44, but the disease tends to strike mostly women of that age, the childbearing years; however, men, children, and teenagers also develop lupus; and

Whereas, people of all races and ethnic groups can develop lupus, but women of color are two to three times more likely to develop lupus than Caucasians; and

Whereas, because lupus can affect so many different organs, a wide range of symptoms can occur, including extreme fatigue; headaches; painful or swollen joints; fever; anemia; swelling in feet, legs, hands, and around eyes; pain in the chest on deep breathing; a butterfly‑shaped rash across cheeks and nose; sun or light sensitivity; hair loss; abnormal blood clotting; fingers turning white or blue when cold, which is Raynaud’s phenomenon; and mouth or nose ulcers; and

Whereas, since many of these symptoms occur in rheumatoid arthritis, blood disorders, fibromyalgia, diabetes, thyroid problems, Lyme disease, and a number of heart, lung, muscle, and bone diseases, lupus is sometimes called “the great imitator”; and

Whereas, Lupus Foundation of America is the only national force devoted to solving the mystery of lupus while giving caring support to those who suffer from its brutal impact. The foundation’s mission is to improve the quality of life for all people affected by lupus through programs of research, education, support, and advocacy. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, recognize the dire effects of lupus on its sufferers and their need for proper medical treatment and observe May 2015 as “Lupus Awareness Month” in South Carolina.

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