**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEND SEVEN‑YEAR‑OLD MARY BURTON WILKINS OF GREENVILLE FOR HER COURAGEOUS BATTLE AGAINST A HEART DEFECT, TO CONGRATULATE HER ON BEING SELECTED AS ONE OF THE LITTLE HEART HONOREES OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION’S SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE CHAPTER, AND TO WISH HER MUCH HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is pleased to learn that seven‑year‑old Mary Burton Wilkins of Greenville has been selected as one of the Little Heart Honorees of the American Heart Association’s South Carolina Upstate chapter and that the courageous Christ Church second‑grader’s story will be featured at the Upstate chapter’s annual Heart Ball; and

Whereas, Mary Burton loves to dance and play tennis and has already run in two 5Ks, even though her parents feared she might never get to do those things when she was diagnosed with a jelly‑bean‑sized hole in her heart at nine months old; and

Whereas, little Mary Burton had an atrial septal defect, a hole between the top two chambers of her heart. It was a frightening time for her parents, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor Walt Wilkins and his wife, Donyelle Wilkins; and

Whereas, because Mary Burton was so small, specialists at the Medical University of South Carolina initially told the Wilkinses that they would keep a close watch on her condition. However, a hole in the heart causes one side to pump much harder than the other, leading it to become enlarged. By the time Mary Burton was four and a half, action was needed; and

Whereas, two options were offered to the young parents: dangerous open‑heart surgery and its weeks of recovery or a relatively new procedure to seal the hole with a mesh patch deployed via a catheter in an artery. The Greenville couple chose to try the new procedure, even though it had only a fifty‑fifty chance of working on Mary Burton; and

Whereas, to the great joy of her parents, Mary Burton woke with no complications, spent the night in the hospital, and the next day was able to go home. The incredible result is a clean bill of health for Mary Burton, who has been healthy ever since and should not have any further problems; and

Whereas, without the fundraising efforts of the American Heart Association, which the Heart Ball celebrates, such advances as the procedure that repaired Mary Burton’s heart defect would not be possible. Between the proceeds from the ball and individual and corporate donations, the Upstate chapter hopes to raise more than $600,000 this year for its work; and

Whereas, the Senate takes great pleasure in recognizing Mary Burton as a Little Heart Honoree of the American Heart Association’s South Carolina Upstate chapter and in saluting her on successfully and bravely meeting the serious health challenge presented to her so early in life. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, commend seven‑year‑old Mary Burton Wilkins of Greenville for her courageous battle against a heart defect, congratulate her on being selected as one of the Little Heart Honorees of the American Heart Association’s South Carolina Upstate chapter, and wish her much health and happiness in the days ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Mary Burton Wilkins.

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