**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN’S BASKETBALL TEAM FOR CAPTURING THE 2015 SEC REGULAR‑SEASON CHAMPIONSHIP, AS WELL AS THE PROGRAM’S FIRST SEC TOURNAMENT TITLE, FOR ADVANCING TO USC’S FIRST NCAA FINAL FOUR IN SCHOOL HISTORY, AND FOR NETTING A FABULOUS POSTSEASON RANKING AS NUMBER 3 IN THE NATION.

Whereas, the pride of the entire Palmetto State, the University of South Carolina women’s basketball team once again has shown its championship form in delivering an exciting 2014‑2015 season; and

Whereas, led by Head Coach Dawn Staley, the Gamecocks repeated as SEC regular‑season champions and went on to claim the program’s first SEC Tournament title. Further, the team finished the season with 34 wins, breaking the thirty‑five‑year‑old school record of 30, set during the 1979‑1980 season; and

Whereas, South Carolinians proved their support for these student athletes by coming out in massive numbers to cheer them on. As a result, USC led the nation in average attendance per game at 12,293, which helped power South Carolina to its second straight undefeated season at Colonial Life Arena; and

Whereas, South Carolina finished the regular season ranked number 3 in the nation, the highest finish in program history. To crown this stellar season, USC earned its second NCAA Tournament number 1 seed in as many seasons and advanced to its first NCAA Final Four in school history‑‑the first for either its men’s or women’s team; and

Whereas, for Head Coach Dawn Staley, the season won her a second straight nomination as one of four finalists for the Naismith Coach of the Year award and made her the WBCA Region 3 Coach of the Year. Now in her seventh season at USC, she repeated as SEC Coach of the Year, as well; and

Whereas, making a sweet season even sweeter, several USC players were honored for their individual performances. Standout Tiffany Mitchell was the first USC player to be named a finalist for all three national Player of the Year awards: the Wooden Award, Wade Trophy, and Naismith Trophy. She won the Dawn Staley Award as the nation’s top guard, repeated as SEC Player of the Year, and was once again a WBCA All‑America selection. In addition, SEC Scholar‑Athlete of the Year Aleighsa Welch earned honorable‑mention All‑America honors from the WBCA and was SEC Tournament Most Outstanding Performer after earning First Team All‑SEC honors for the second consecutive season; and

Whereas, freshman A’ja Wilson earned a spot on the All‑SEC First Team and was named league Freshman of the Year by both the coaches and the Associated Press. She also was an honorable‑mention WBCA All‑America selection. Moreover, sophomore Alaina Coates was named the NCAA Greensboro Region Most Outstanding Player, capping a season that yielded a spot on the SEC Second Team and All‑Defensive Team; and

Whereas, Head Coach Staley rightly has her sights on a return to the Final Four next year. The members of the Senate are pleased to hear this news, delighted to raise their collective salute to her and her fine group of young student athletes, and proud to declare themselves among the team’s most ardent fans. On behalf of the people of South Carolina, the members offer their congratulations on a class act and best wishes for continued success. Go, Gamecocks! Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and celebrate the University of South Carolina women’s basketball team for capturing the 2015 SEC regular‑season championship, as well as the program’s first SEC Tournament title, for advancing to USC’s first NCAA Final Four in school history, and for netting a fabulous postseason ranking as number 3 in the nation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the USC women’s basketball team and Head Coach Dawn Staley.

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