**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE FIRST BAPTIST SCHOOL VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM, COACHES, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR A REMARKABLE SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR WINNING THE 2016 SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION CLASS AA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is delighted to learn that the First Baptist football team of Charleston County took top honors at the state competition held at Charlie W. Johnson Stadium in Columbia on Saturday, November 19, 2016; and

Whereas, amid the clamorous cheers of their exuberant fans, the First Baptist Hurricanes of Charleston used a spread offense and ran the ball well to defeat Robert E. Lee Academy 28‑21, claiming the state championship and recording an impressive 10‑2 season, when only two years previously, the team did not win a single game; and

Whereas, although the Hurricanes fell behind 14‑0 to the Robert E. Lee Cavaliers early in the second quarter of the championship game, they kept their focus on the finish and wore the Cavaliers down with the way they ran the football. When halftime came, First Baptist had tied the score and went to the lockers with confidence; and

Whereas, the Hurricanes first scored with almost seven minutes left in the second quarter after they plowed sixty‑six yards in six plays, and their Michel Dukes found the end zone from two yards out; and

Whereas, on the next First Baptist possession, Ahmad Green returned a punt for fifty‑four yards to the Cavaliers’ ten‑yard line, and in four more plays Cameron Berl completed a pass to Callum Scott on the left side of the end zone for a nine‑yard touchdown; and

Whereas, with just five minutes remaining in the third quarter, Michel Dukes, who led the Lowcountry in rushing this season with more than 2,100 yards and thirty‑six touchdowns, gave the Hurricanes their first lead when he exploded in a 24‑yard run down the right side that produced another touchdown; and

Whereas, although the Cavaliers answered on their next possession and tied the game at 21, First Baptist’s Tylan Major caught a 36‑yard touchdown pass from Cameron Berl at the end of the third quarter, and the strong Hurricane defense pounded the Cavalier line and kept a victory from Robert E. Lee; and

Whereas, First Baptist sophomore Michel Dukes rushed for 136 yards and scored two touchdowns in the championship game while the team’s quarterback, Cameron Berl, threw for another 166 yards and posted two more TDs to lead the Hurricanes to victory; and

Whereas, Head Coach Johnny Waters and his skilled coaching staff witnessed the culmination of a rebuilding project that he introduced to the Hurricanes when he took the job three years earlier. Through relentless practices, the coaches capitalized on their athletic ability and training to build a championship team and teach these athletes invaluable life lessons for both on and off the gridiron; and

Whereas, Coach Waters knew his players and the program were making progress and never lost faith in what this team could achieve. The First Baptist offense did their job and were ably backed by a defense which made a great goal-line stand in the fourth quarter to solidify the championship victory; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives appreciate the pride and recognition that the First Baptist football players have brought to their school and their community and look to hear of their continued accomplishments in the days to come. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the First Baptist School varsity football team, coaches, and school officials for a remarkable season and congratulate them for winning the 2016 South Carolina Independent School Association Class AA State Championship title.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Coach Johnny Waters.

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