**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF THE ORIGINAL GULLAH FESTIVAL OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR ITS MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS IN RETAINING THE HISTORIC GULLAH CULTURE AND FOR ITS ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE’S TOURISM INDUSTRY.

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina are pleased to learn that the 2017 Original Gullah Festival of South Carolina will be held from May 26 through May 28 at the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park located on Bay Street in the heart of the City of Beaufort; and

Whereas, for thirty‑one years, the goal of the Original Gullah Festival of South Carolina has been to reclaim the lilting beauty and intriguing mystery of the disappearing Gullah culture for future generations, a rich culture with a mixture of West‑African legacy, as well as Native American and African‑American heritage; and

Whereas, the festival also fosters arts in education by providing scholarships to worthy students, and the organizers seek to engender a deeper understanding and appreciation for the Gullah culture; and

Whereas, first held in 1986 by natives of Beaufort, the festival has been a four‑day celebration of the historically significant Sea Island heritage and focuses on education and cultural preservation of the African‑American Gullah heritage of the Lowcountry; and

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Whereas, highlights include a plethora of consumer, educational, and historical workshops; a fine arts exhibit; demonstrations; and a wide range of music and food, something to please everyone; and

Whereas, a non‑alcoholic festival, the Original Gullah Festival has remained family oriented and an excellent place for a variety of reunion activities and friendly gatherings, reflecting a substantial component of Gullah culture; and

Whereas, from its humble beginnings of about thirty‑five attendees, tourists numbering in the tens of thousands now attend the festival annually from forty‑two states and from such foreign countries as Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Canada, Australia, England, Germany, and Guadeloupe; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is grateful for the profound influence that the Original Gullah Festival of South Carolina has had on maintaining the benefits of Gullah culture for posterity and for the dedicated work of its enthusiastic organizers in producing a quality event for visitors from around the world to the Lowcountry. 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 significant impact of the Original Gullah Festival of South Carolina and express appreciation for its meaningful contributions in retaining the historic Gullah culture and for its economic contributions to the state’s tourism industry.

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