**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND COMMEND MS. BERTHA SMALLS MIDDLETON FOR HER DEDICATED COMMUNITY SERVICE AND TO WISH HER MUCH SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN ALL HER FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, Ms. Bertha Smalls Middleton was raised on Wadmalaw Island by her grandparents and attended local schools there. She attended Barber‑Scotia College and Wayne Community College, both in North Carolina, and earned an associate’s degree in computer science and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix; and

Whereas, following a nearly two decades‑long career out‑of‑state in the information technology field, Ms. Middleton returned to the island to help care for her aunt. She soon became the volunteer director of the Wadmalaw Island Community Center (WICC), which over the years had fallen into disrepair. Through her tireless efforts, money was raised to repair the roof, paint the building, install a handicapped ramp, and make other repairs necessary to reopen the center. She recruited volunteers and found donors from the community to contribute their time and financial resources to start new programs for the Wadmalaw Island seniors; and

Whereas, receiving no salary and working over sixty hours per week, Ms. Middleton is a true volunteer. Without federal or state funding, she was able to raise WICC from an unused building to a pleasant community gathering place which offers a multitude of services to area citizens; and

Whereas, through her efforts, over one hundred meals are prepared and delivered daily to the homebound, elderly, and disabled residents of Johns and Wadmalaw Islands. Also, she organizes weekly visits with seniors to assess their living conditions, ensuring they have the supplies necessary to maintain their well‑being regardless of the season. Furthermore, she aids in raising funds to help with home repairs and to replace major appliances for those who cannot afford to make such purchases; and

Whereas, the WICC offers a multitude of classes and educational seminars to the community. During her first year at the WICC, Ms. Middleton was able to arrange for the donation of sixteen new sewing machines. Now, weekly quilting classes are held by a professional quilting instructor to teach seniors the art of making beautiful quilts. The resulting creations are used to further support the community, with some being sold as a source of income for the WICC and others being donated to nursing home residents or the children’s hospital at the Medical University of South Carolina; and

Whereas, other educational seminars the WICC offer are on veterans’ benefits, wellness, caregiver training, hurricane preparedness, and more, all offered by a multitude of generous partners; and

Whereas, in 2012, she was able to secure an over six‑acre plot of land to establish a park for members of the community to enjoy. More than fifteen thousand dollars was raised by the community to fund the park’s development, and a local landscaping company donated indigenous plants to further beautify what is now known as the Wadmalaw Island Community Park; and

Whereas, the WICC also partners with the local elementary schools, parent‑teacher associations, and school officials to raise donations for school supplies for children in need; and

Whereas, Ms. Middleton encourages and supports youth volunteers by creating activities and events for them to utilize their skills while accumulating volunteer hours. She also hosts an end‑of‑the‑year celebration honoring veterans in the community with lunch, an inspirational speaker, and gifts; and

Whereas, she has earned several awards recognizing her public service. Some of these include the Angel Oak award from the Kiawah‑Seabrook Exchange, Citizen Servant of the Year from Prince Hall Grand Lodge, and recognition as an outstanding community leader by United States Representative Mark Sanford and former United States Representative Robert Brown; and

Whereas, Ms. Middleton is the mother of two cherished children, Staff Sergeant Tawana Middleton and Marcus Middleton, and the grandmother of two treasured granddaughters. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor and commend Ms. Bertha Smalls Middleton for her dedicated community service and wish her much success and happiness in all her future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ms. Bertha Smalls Middleton.

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