**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE ELLA MAE GAINES‑PHILLIPS OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF HER SEVENTY‑FIFTH BIRTHDAY AND TO WISH HER A JOYOUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND MUCH HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

Whereas, on January 12, 2017, Ella Mae Gaines‑Phillips of Orangeburg County awoke to the celebration of a milestone event: her seventy‑fifth birthday; and

Whereas, the last of three children born to Daniel and Bessie Carson‑Gaines, the young Ella Mae came into this world on January 12, 1942. Reared in a Christian household, Ella Mae accepted the Lord as her Savior at an early age. At the tender age of ten, she was baptized at Antioch Baptist Church, where she presently serves the Lord. She is a member of the Pastor’s Pulpit Aide Committee and has been recognized for her consistent support of the Antioch Mass Choir; and

Whereas, having been educated in the public schools of Bowman, Ella Mae moved to Washington, D.C., where in the fullness of time she met Willis Henry Phillips of Edgefield. The two were wed in November 1959, God blessing their union with four delightful children, Janice, Willis, Rodney, and Tiffany, as well as five grandchildren and one great‑grandson. During the family’s years in D.C., Ella Mae worked at the United States General Accounting Office, while Willis worked at the United States Department of the Interior; and

Whereas, after Ella Mae’s husband became paralyzed and received a medical retirement from the Department of the Interior, her family relocated to Bowman in 1972. Ella Mae remained a dedicated wife and compassionate caregiver to Willis for thirty‑two years. In 2004, Willis quietly passed away, Ella Mae and Willis having been blessed with forty‑five years of marriage; and

Whereas, in 1998, at fifty‑six years of age, Ella Mae received an associate degree in business (office systems technology) from Orangeburg Technical College. Thereafter, Ella Mae was employed with Orangeburg County School District 5 at Bowman High School; and

Whereas, over the years, Ella Mae has quietly blessed many in need of help, all in the name of the Lord. Since 1973, she has been a member of the La Charm Club (treasurer) and Youthful Ladies Club (assistant secretary). Through these organizations, she has awarded scholarships to students at Bethune Bowman High School, supported the Good Samaritan House, and given to other charitable causes. Further, she has bestowed a college scholarship on each of her adult grandchildren in honor of her husband. Every year, she supports the Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness and has mentored youth. In addition, her love for ancestry annually takes her to the historic Shady Grove Methodist Campground, where she follows in the footsteps of her nineteenth‑century forebears; and

Whereas, this caring mom, grandmom, and neighbor continues to enjoy life with her family and friends. She especially relishes watching videos of her great‑grandson, Henry Phillips, and her favorite gospel artist, Deitrick Haddon. Known as the lady with the “warm smile, gentle voice, and vibrant laughter,” Ella Mae is the matriarch of the Gaines‑Phillips family, an unconditional giver, and a devoted Christian; and

Whereas, the Senate takes great pleasure in honoring Ella Mae Gaines‑Phillips on the occasion of her seventy‑fifth birthday, and the members join with her family and friends in wishing a very special lady a truly special year to come. Now therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Ella Mae Gaines‑Phillips of Orangeburg County on the occasion of her seventy‑fifth birthday and wish her a joyous birthday celebration and much happiness in the days ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ella Mae Gaines‑Phillips.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑