**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND RECOGNIZE HELEN PRIDGEN FOR HER MANY YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THIS STATE.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are deeply honored to recognize the countless accomplishments of Helen Pridgen in service to suicide prevention in this State; and

Whereas, Helen Pridgen has promoted suicide prevention in South Carolina since the suicide of her son Clay in 2000; and

Whereas, in 2005, Helen chaired South Carolina’s first Out of the Darkness Walk in Columbia, and in 2008, she founded the South Carolina Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Helen served on the chapter’s original board of directors and became its first area director in 2011; and

Whereas, through the South Carolina chapter, Helen has implemented many educational programs, including More Than Sad, Talk Saves Lives, It’s Real, and safeTALK. She has also hosted Training for Trainers for all of these life‑saving programs; and

Whereas, as a strong advocate for mental health, Helen has lobbied locally and nationally, giving a voice to those whose voices have gone silent. In South Carolina, she was instrumental in the passage of the Jason Flatt Act, which requires all certified school personnel from the sixth grade through high school to have two hours of suicide prevention training before recertification; and

Whereas, Helen also launched programs for survivors of suicide loss throughout the State, such as Healing Conversations and survivor day programs. Year after year, she has been able to get many volunteers involved; and

Whereas, as area director, Helen partnered with the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the Department of Mental Health to relaunch the South Carolina Suicide Prevention Coalition; and

Whereas, today, due to Helen’s efforts, South Carolina hosts eight Out of the Darkness Walks and five campus walks. The South Carolina chapter’s board of directors is comprised of members from all areas of the State; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is grateful for the commitment and dedication that this daughter of South Carolina has shown in serving the State and the people of South Carolina. The members extend best wishes to Helen as she takes her passion for suicide prevention to the national level as Vice President of Chapter Programs for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, honor and recognize Helen Pridgen for her many years of dedicated service to suicide prevention in this State.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Helen Pridgen.

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