**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND GREECE AS IT ASSUMES AN INCREASING LEADERSHIP ROLE IN RESOLVING LONG‑STANDING DIPLOMATIC ISSUES IN ITS NEIGHBORHOOD, TO AFFIRM OUR COMMON VISION TO INTEGRATE THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION FIRMLY IN EUROPEAN AND EURO‑ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS, AND TO CELEBRATE MARCH 25, 2019, AS THE 198TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE.

Whereas, on March 25, 1821, the Feast Day of the Annunciation, the Greek nation reclaimed its ancient heritage as the “Cradle of Democracy” by overthrowing the yoke of oppression which had enslaved its people since the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth century, Greece waged a successful war of independence (1821‑1829) and re‑instituted a democratic form of government; and

Whereas, the people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance to the Greek people during their struggle for independence; and

Whereas, the price for Greece in holding on to our common values in their region proved to be high, as hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in Greece during World War II; and

Whereas, Greece is one of only three nations in the world, beyond the former British Empire, that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict over the last one hundred years; and

Whereas, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, Greece maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and with Israel and demonstrates religious tolerance; and

Whereas, the ancient Macedonians were Hellenes, and their Hellenic descendants are in the Northern Province of Greece, Macedonia; and

Whereas, Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights; and

Whereas, over the past year, the United States has significantly increased its engagement with Greece in the maritime sector. In partnership with the Greek shipping fleet, the United States is helping Greece and all of southeast Europe to ensure energy independence; and

Whereas, March 25, 2019, Greek Independence Day, marks the 198th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire and celebrates the aspirations for democracy and tolerance that the people of Greece and the United States share; and

Whereas, the role of United States’ innovation and technology in Greece’s shipping sector, where ONEX also announced its additional plans for other operations in Greece, was highlighted at the 2018 Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF); and

Whereas, in December 2018, at the United States‑Greece Strategic Dialogue, it was clear that both nations, along with their European Union partners, are united in their belief that Greece is a pillar of stability in a region that stretches from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and on to the Persian Gulf, a region vital to United States’ interests; and

Whereas, in September 2018, the United States’ participation as the host nation in the Greek City of Thessaloniki in the 83rd Thessaloniki International Trade Fair, under the auspices of United States Ambassador Geoffrey R. Pyatt, highlighted a landmark event in Greek‑United States’ relations and an economic partnership between the two nations; and

Whereas, United States Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross stressed, during the energy conference organized by the American‑Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), that the presence of major American companies at the TIF is a sign of trust in the future of Greece’s economy and of America’s desire to be a part of it; and

Whereas, it is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate this anniversary with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great nations were born and for South Carolina to reaffirm its abiding commitment to the magnificent principles of democracy and religious freedom. 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 commend Greece as it assumes an increasing leadership role in resolving long‑standing diplomatic issues in its neighborhood, affirm our common vision to integrate the countries of the region firmly in European and Euro‑Atlantic institutions, and celebrate March 25, 2019, as the 198th anniversary of Greek independence.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Honorable Emmanouil Androulakis, Consul of Greece in Atlanta, and Archbishop Demtrios of the Greek Archdiocese of America.

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