**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE WORK OF DREAMS WITH OPEN ARMS, INC., TO PREVENT ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY, TO DESIGNATE MAY AS THE “STEP UP & BE SAFE MONTH” IN SOUTH CAROLINA, AND TO COMMEND ITS OBSERVANCE TO ALL CITIZENS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives deeply appreciate the sustained and successful efforts of Dreams with Open Arms, Inc., to prevent adolescent pregnancy in South Carolina; and

Whereas, in the United States every year seven hundred fifty thousand teens experience pregnancy, and as a result, are less likely to finish high school or enter college and are more likely to experience poverty than teens who do not, and four hundred thousand of those teens give birth every year; and

Whereas, since the early 1990s, the teen birth rate in South Carolina has fallen by sixty‑one percent, a remarkable decline and an impressive success story for the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, between 2013 and 2014, the State experienced a substantial decrease when the teen birth rate for fifteen to nineteen year olds declined by ten percent, the state’s lowest average in recorded history, twenty eight and a half per thousand teens; and

Whereas, declines have been most substantial over the last twenty years among school‑aged youth between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, whose own smart decisions have driven the trend to decrease the birth rate by seventy‑one percent since 1991; and

Whereas, in spite of these successes, South Carolina still has the thirteenth highest teen birth rate in the nation, and many counties record averages far behind those for the nation; and

Whereas, though cultural representations of teens often focus on their perceived irresponsibility, today’s teens tend to be more responsible sexually than teens in previous generations; and

Whereas, supportive communities and parents who are more engaged can have a significant impact on maintaining these trends and can enable young people to continue to form similarly responsible decisions; and

Whereas, when teens do not experience pregnancy or give birth, they can finish their education and contribute to the economy and to the tax base, resulting in multiplied benefits to the teens, as well as to taxpayers and the State. 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 the work of Dreams with Open Arms, Inc., to prevent adolescent pregnancy, designate May as the “Step Up & Be Safe Month” in South Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to LaSean Tutt, founder and CEO of Dreams with Open Arms.

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