**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2020, “SOUTH CAROLINA MILITARY DEPARTMENT DAY” IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE MANY SACRIFICES AND VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THE SOUTH CAROLINA MILITARY DEPARTMENT MAKES TO PROTECT THE FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, AND SECURITY OF OUR STATE AND NATION.

Whereas, the South Carolina Military Department is a community‑based organization having a total direct economic impact of over $591 million and serving a dual role: to serve abroad in support of national defense in partnership with active duty and reserve units and to serve the Governor and citizens of South Carolina. The strength of the South Carolina Military Department is its personnel. Currently, the department consists of more than 12,000 part‑ and full‑time service members and civilian employees, including approximately 9,400 soldiers, 1,350 airmen, 900 State Guard and Joint Service Detachment members, and 500 state employees; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Military Department serves the Governor of South Carolina and the citizens of South Carolina in response to natural disasters, civil unrest, and contingency operations as directed by the Governor. The South Carolina National Guard supports the federal mission to serve in support of national defense in partnership with active duty and reserve units both overseas and in the continental United States; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Military Department consists of the South Carolina Army and Air National Guards, South Carolina Emergency Management Division, South Carolina State Guard, Joint Services Detachment, South Carolina Military Museum, STARBASE Swamp Fox, South Carolina Youth Challenge/Job Challenge, and State Operations; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Military Department has deployed more than twenty‑five thousand soldiers and airmen of the South Carolina Army and Air National Guards since Sept. 11, 2001, in support of overseas contingency operations, and currently there are more than five hundred Guard members deployed here in the continental United States and overseas in support of maintaining America’s freedom. In addition, the South Carolina National Guard has continued to provide critical support to the State and its citizens during times of emergencies and disasters; and

Whereas, the South Carolina State Guard stands ready to provide assistance to the State and its citizens in times of need. This voluntary force operates in support of the National Guard and the State during emergency operations; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Emergency Management Division serves as the state coordinating agency for response and recovery from natural and man‑made disasters. While its recovery and mitigation staff address ongoing short, intermediate, and long‑term needs from previous natural disasters, the South Carolina Emergency Management Division continues to prepare for the next challenge, as well as continuing to assist in support of ongoing recovery operations; and

Whereas, through its STARBASE Swamp Fox Program, the South Carolina Military Department continues to provide educational programs to fifth‑grade students to enhance and encourage education and participation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Its youth and job challenge programs are part of a nationwide National Guard Bureau‑funded program to provide a wealth of educational enrichment offered by the staff and facilities, with a commitment to serving South Carolina’s at‑risk youth; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Military Department’s State Military Museum is the only museum in the State that covers South Carolina’s complete military history from 1670, when the colony of Carolina was founded, to present‑day operations in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Military Department has more than sixty operational facilities throughout the State in forty‑one of forty‑six counties, and its efforts have resulted in more efficient and sustainable facility operations. This has enabled the agency to provide effective services to soldiers and their families while also supporting the local civilian community. Its purpose is to promote and provide regionally accessible programs that support comprehensive fitness dimensions and employment to reduce stressors for service members and their families, enabling them to thrive personally and professionally; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is extremely grateful for the service that the members of the South Carolina Military Department have given to protect the citizens and traditional values of this nation and deeply honor the memory of the sixteen soldiers in the South Carolina Military Department who have paid the ultimate price in support of combat operations since September 11, 2001. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, declare Tuesday, February 25, 2020, “South Carolina Military Department Day” in South Carolina and recognize and honor the many sacrifices and valuable contributions the South Carolina Military Department makes to protect the freedom, democracy, and security of our State and nation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to U.S. Army Major General R. Van McCarty, South Carolina’s Adjutant General.

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