**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE ALL GREENVILLE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES FOR THEIR RECENT EFFORTS FACILITATING CITIZENS EXERCISING THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO PEACEFULLY ASSEMBLE AND PETITION THEIR GOVERNMENT TO REDRESS THEIR GRIEVANCES.

Whereas, the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America dictates, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances”; and

Whereas, Section 2, Article I of the South Carolina State Constitution, 1895 states, “The General Assembly shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government or any department thereof for a redress of grievances”; and

Whereas, in the shadow of these Constitutional rights, recent national events sparked many community organizers and South Carolina citizens with a desire to exercise the sacred rights outlined in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Section 2, Article I of the State Constitution; and

Whereas, as tensions rose during recent events in the City of Greenville and Greenville County, communication between leaders in law enforcement, and leaders of those who wished to exercise their constitutional rights helped to keep the peace and avoid violence as conflicts arose; and

Whereas, Greenville County Sheriff Hobart Lewis expressed his support of peaceful assembly stating, “It’s important for everyone to have their voices heard, and we’re going to make sure that happens safely and peacefully.”; and

Whereas, City of Greenville Interim Police Chief Howie Thompson echoed Sheriff Lewis’ support of those expressing their constitutional rights stating, “We are here to work with them in any way we can…we want to learn from this, too.”; and

Whereas, Sheriff Lewis and Chief Thompson attribute the peaceful assembly to the communication between law enforcement and community leaders, the willingness of protest participants to listen to community organizers, and the expectations of law enforcement, as well as the professional behavior of the officers involved; and

Whereas, this open communication between law enforcement and community organizers fostered a spirit of cooperation among the parties and allowed South Carolina citizens to safely and effectively assemble and have their grievances heard; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased with the good judgment and decision making of law enforcement, their professional behavior during recent events, and their commitment to enabling the people of South Carolina to exercise their rights as citizens of the Palmetto State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate all Greenville County law enforcement agencies for their recent efforts facilitating citizens exercising their constitutional rights to peacefully assemble and petition their government to redress their grievances.

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