**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO MEMORIALIZE THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND URGE THEM TO ASSIST THE FARMING COMMUNITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY INCREASING THE PROCESSING EXEMPTION UNDER THE POULTRY PRODUCT INSPECTION ACT FROM ONE THOUSAND TO THREE THOUSAND AND PASSING THE PRIME ACT.

Whereas, the poultry industry accounts for forty percent of all agricultural production and eighty percent of animal agriculture in South Carolina with sales reaching $1.5 billion per year; and

Whereas, poultry companies generate nearly 13,000 jobs and this number does not include jobs related to the production, shipment, and distribution of poultry products; and

Whereas, the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA) was enacted to require the United States Department of Agriculture to regulate the processing and distribution of poultry products to ensure that poultry is fit for human consumption. The act currently allows for a slaughter or processing operation that produces no more than one thousand poultry in a calendar year to be exempt from federal inspections as long as the operation maintains certain sanitation standards; and

Whereas, increasing the exemption number from one thousand to three thousand would allow small farms within our State to supply more poultry into the chain of commerce during trying economic times without the inclusion of unnecessary red tape; and

Whereas, in 2017, Congressman Thomas Massie of Kentucky introduced the Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption Act (the PRIME Act) which would exempt certain slaughter facilities and meats prepared exclusively for in-state distribution within a state from federal inspection guidelines; and

Whereas, the spread of the COVID‑19 pandemic across the globe has hurt the ability of farms in this State to distribute their agricultural products, and as a result, they face heavy financial losses. However, the loosening of regulations on poultry farms and slaughter facilities would allow smaller farms to sell their products directly to consumers without the increased burdens of inspection; and

Whereas, the amendment of the PPIA and the passage of the PRIME Act would greatly benefit South Carolina farmers and give them a fighting chance against this unprecedented pandemic and an uncertain future. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, memorialize the United States Congress and urge them to assist the farming community of South Carolina during the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing the processing exemption under the Poultry Product Inspection Act from one thousand to three thousand and passing the PRIME Act.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the members of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation.

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