**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR MARY LOU SCHWEICKERT, MUSIC EDUCATOR FOR HAND MIDDLE SCHOOL, ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT AFTER FORTY YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE, AND TO WISH HER MUCH HAPPINESS AS SHE BEGINS HER WELL‑DESERVED RETIREMENT.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that Mary Lou Schweickert, music educator for Hand Middle School, will soon begin a well‑deserved retirement after devoting four decades of her incredibly valuable time and expertise for the betterment of her students; and

Whereas, a longtime employee of Hand Middle School, Mary Lou Schweickert began her career as a music educator in 1981. Guiding the program’s evolution over the past forty years, she has seen tremendous growth of the band department; and

Whereas, having taught the Hand Middle School musicians with care and dedication, many of her students have been recognized on local, state, and national levels. In one instance, a student who was influenced by her teaching went on to win a Grammy, and others have participated in the Middle School Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall in New York City; and

Whereas, a National Board Certified teacher since 2002, Mrs. Schweickert is also a skilled musician in her own right, playing the trombone in the South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra; and

Whereas, serving in many positions over the years, Mrs. Schweickert is currently Richland County School District One’s lead Band Teacher, and previously she served as the lead related arts teacher. A distinguished educator, she received the honor of being Hand Middle School’s Teacher of the Year in 1985‑86 and during the 2005‑06 school years. A past consultant to the Annenburg Foundation in a video series about arts inclusion and a current cooperating teacher for the University of South Carolina’s Music Education Student Teachers, her absence will be bittersweet as they seek someone to undertake her myriad of responsibilities; and

Whereas, invaluable to the school for her efforts in bettering the music program, Mrs. Schweickert was responsible for Hand Middle School being awarded the first Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Grant in 2002, which has been awarded through the South Carolina Arts Commission every year since. She has also helped Hand Middle School receive the South Carolina Distinguished Arts Program Grant; and

Whereas, rewarded for her many efforts, Mrs. Schweickert led Hand Middle School to receive the Kennedy Center’s Creative Ticket of Excellence Award in 2005, which also earned Hand Middle School a place as a National School of Distinction; and

Whereas, tremendously talented, Mrs. Schweickert has a gift for encouraging student participation. For many years her students have participated in volunteer activities, such as South Carolina’s Walk for Life 5K event and following her participation in Richland County School District One’s Jazz Band, which holds performances at Emily Douglas Park. She even started a successful student Jazz Band to join in performances; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives recognizes the success of the State of South Carolina, the strength of its communities, and the vitality of American society as a whole depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of individuals like Mary Lou Schweickert, who use their talents and time to serve and inspire others. 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 honor Mary Lou Schweickert, music educator for Hand Middle School, on the occasion of her retirement after forty years of exemplary service, and to wish her much happiness as she begins her well‑deserved retirement.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mary Lou Schweickert.

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