**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE SOTERIA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ON THE OPENING OF THEIR NEW TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITY FOR WOMEN AND TO DECLARE APRIL 2022 AS “SECOND CHANCE MONTH” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is grateful for the critical services provided by the Soteria Community Development Corporation (CDC), a ministry born by Jerry Blassingame, that assists individuals who have been incarcerated to reenter society, helping them to become productive citizens; and

Whereas, individuals returning from prison and those who have paid their debt after committing a crime face significant barriers and often struggle to find housing, employment, or education; regain voting rights; volunteer in their community; and often must pay for significant debt that arises as a result of their conviction and incarceration; and

With a passion for reaching individuals whose lives have been impacted by crime, Soteria CDC provides individuals with the necessary essentials, including housing, job training, and discipleship programs, that they need in order to smoothly transition back into society; and

Whereas, in the past five years, only 4% of the men served by Soteria CDC have returned to prison, much lower than the state average of over than 31%; and

Whereas, Soteria CDC opened its first transitional home for men in 2001, with a four bed capacity. By 2005, the ministry had expanded to include reentry services for women. After adding additional homes and later converting them into low‑income rental properties, the Soteria House in Traveler’s Rest was opened in 2018, a fifteen bed residential housing facility for men; and

Whereas, Greenville County incarcerates more women than any other county in South Carolina. To serve these women navigating the obstacles of reentry back into society, Soteria CDC will open a sixteen bed transitional housing facility for women on May 1, 2022, mirroring the men’s program by offering housing, job training, and life skills classes; and

Whereas, recognizing the importance of providing support to individuals reentering society following incarceration, the designation of April as “Second Chance Month” will contribute to increased public awareness about the need for closure for those who have paid their debt and will encourage the creation of opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and communities to extend second chances. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate Soteria Community Development Corporation on the opening of their new transitional housing facility for women and declare April 2022 as “Second Chance Month” in South Carolina.

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