**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE MAY 12, 2021 AS “MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS AWARENESS DAY” AND THE MONTH OF MAY AS “MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS AWARENESS MONTH” IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN ORDER TO HELP SPREAD AWARENESS OF THE DISEASE AND THE NEED FOR INCREASED RESEARCH FUNDING AND TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH CHRONIC POST‑VIRAL NEUROIMMUNE DISEASES, SPECIFICALLY MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS.

Whereas, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, sometimes called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, is a neuroimmune disease characterized by overwhelming fatigue, “brain fog,” pain, post‑exertional malaise, headaches, cardiac symptoms, immune dysfunction, hypometabolism, lack of energy production at a cellular level, orthostatic intolerance, severe dizziness and balance problems, increased morbidity, and a higher risk of suicide due to a lack of treatment and neglect; and

Whereas, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis afflicts an estimated 15,000 to 38,000 South Carolina residents; 836,000 to 2.5 million Americans; and 17 to 20 million people worldwide; and

Whereas, the virus that causes COVID-19 has infected more than 29 million Americans, many of whom may never recover, and has caused over 500,000 deaths. In South Carolina, more than 450,000 people have been infected, and 7,800 have died; and

Whereas, subsets of COVID-19 patients are presenting with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis symptoms, such as brain inflammation, and experts expect a significant increase of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis cases in the next two years in the United States following the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis affects individuals of every age, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic group, including children. Research shows that Myalgic Encephalomyelitis is two to four times more likely to occur in women than men; and

Whereas, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis has been found by the National Academy of Medicine to be “a serious, chronic, complex, and systemic disease that frequently and dramatically limits the activities of affected patients.” One‑quarter of patients are housebound or bedridden, while one‑half to three‑quarters of patients are unable to work or attend school, and patients are often ill for years or a lifetime; and

Whereas, the economic impact of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis in medical expenses and lost productivity is estimated to be $257 million to $363 million per year in South Carolina and $17 billion to $24 billion per year in the United States; and

Whereas, the severity of both COVID-19 and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis ranges from mild to completely debilitating and, in some cases, can be fatal; and

Whereas, not all physicians are sufficiently educated on the proper diagnosis of COVID-19 subsets or Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, or on current treatments for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. This leads to excess health care costs, errors in treatments, and harm to patients; and

Whereas, the National Academy of Medicine has stated that there is a “paucity of research to date,” with grossly inadequate research funding that “does not reflect disease burden, prevalence, and economic cost to society”; and

Whereas, given the lack of research, there is no diagnostic test and no federal Food and Drug Administration‑approved treatments. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that eighty‑four percent of those with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis are either misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all, and most patients have no access to doctors with expertise in the disease; and

Whereas, increased public awareness of the severity of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis will help alleviate any misplaced stigma and discrimination and will lead to increased funding for research, treatment, and clinical education; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly urge state agencies, medical service providers, health care agencies, research facilities, medical schools, and federal agencies to work toward increasing clinical care, supportive care, and medical education and research funding for chronic post‑viral neuroimmune diseases, specifically Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. The General Assembly also encourages schools, colleges, and media organizations to inform the public about Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize May 12, 2021 as “Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Awareness Day” and the month of May as “Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Awareness Month” in South Carolina in order to help spread awareness of the disease and the need for increased research funding and to support individuals living with chronic post‑viral neuroimmune diseases, specifically Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

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