**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE FAMILY CONNECTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA ON THE OCCASION OF ITS TWENTY‑FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE ORGANIZATION FOR ITS MANY YEARS OF COMPASSIONATE SERVICE TO FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS AND DISABILITIES.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is pleased to learn that Family Connection of South Carolina is celebrating a quarter century of service to the people of the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, a statewide nonprofit organization, Family Connection of South Carolina links families of children with special healthcare needs and disabilities with resources, support, and education. Its mission is to strengthen and encourage families of children with special healthcare needs through parent support; and

Whereas, according to the 2012 American Community Survey, the overall percentage of people of all ages with a disability in South Carolina is 13.9 percent. Further, approximately one million children under the age of eighteen live in this State. The 2009/2010 National Survey of Children with Special Healthcare Needs reports that 16.5 percent of all children in South Carolina, from birth to seventeen years of age, have a special healthcare need, compared to 15.1 percent nationwide; and

Whereas, since its inception in 1990, Family Connection of South Carolina has received a total of more than forty‑seven thousand referrals from families of children with special healthcare needs, made over thirty‑two thousand parent‑to‑parent matches for such families, grown from one hundred twenty referrals in its first year to more than three thousand referrals each fiscal year, enlarged its service area to include all forty‑six counties in South Carolina, and enlisted the help of more than six hundred volunteer support parents throughout the State; and

Whereas, in recognition of its spirit of excellence and dedicated service to the people of South Carolina, Family Connection of South Carolina has been granted various honors, among them the 1997 and 2012 David W. Robinson Catalyst Award from the Central Carolina Community Foundation, the 2001 Angel Award presented by the South Carolina Secretary of State, Charities Division, and the 2011‑2012 Junior League Friend of the League Award. Family Connection’s Project Breathe Easy Asthma Program, in conjunction with Greenville Health Systems, won the American Hospital Association’s NOVA Award in 2014; and

Whereas, as part of its services, Family Connection has hosted the Columbia Buddy Walk through the National Down Syndrome Society since 2000. Since 2004, Family Connection has been the state’s Family-to-Family Health Information Center & Family Voices representative. Also, in March 2015, Family Connection will host its twenty‑first annual Hopes & Dreams Conference for parents and professionals; and

Whereas, it is entirely appropriate for the Senate to pause in its deliberations to salute the worthy labors of Family Connection of South Carolina, particularly during the week that marks Disability Advocacy Day, March 4, 2015. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Family Connection of South Carolina on the occasion of its twenty‑fifth anniversary and commend the organization for its many years of compassionate service to families of children with special healthcare needs and disabilities.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Family Connection of South Carolina.

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