**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE F‑35 LIGHTNING II AND F‑16 FIGHTING FALCON TO AMERICA’S SECURITY AND TO SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO CALL FOR FULL FUNDING BY THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS.

Whereas, the F‑35 Lightning II, the world’s only 5th Generation fighter, is critical to America’s and our allies’ national defense strategy; and

Whereas, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501 (VMFAT‑501) is located at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, flying F‑35Bs; and

Whereas, all American pilots and those of our allies who fly the F‑35B are trained at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort. Some of these pilots have already flown F‑35Bs in combat environments, protecting the free world from great threats to our liberty; and

Whereas, the F‑35 program has an economic impact in South Carolina of approximately thirty-four million dollars, supporting more than five hundred South Carolina jobs; and

Whereas, the F‑16 is proven as the world’s most capable 4th Generation multi‑role fighter, used by twenty-eight countries around the world; and

Whereas, the F‑16 Fighting Falcon will be manufactured at Lockheed Martin Greenville Operations; and

Whereas, the F‑16 Block 70 has improved radar systems, advanced weapons capabilities, and enhanced battlespace awareness; and

Whereas, Slovakia and Bahrain have ordered new F‑16 Block 70 fighters that will be manufactured at the newly relocated F‑16 assembly line in Greenville, with other countries in negotiations to buy the F‑16 Block 70 now; and

Whereas, the F‑16 line in Greenville is expected to add approximately one hundred fifty new jobs to the current workforce of five hundred South Carolinians at Lockheed Martin Greenville Operations; and

Whereas, Lockheed Martin Greenville Operations has delivered nearly three thousand aircraft across the globe, has invested more than two hundred forty million dollars in capital expenditures, and contributes an annual economic impact of one hundred million dollars to the Greenville area; and

Whereas, more than seven hundred Lockheed Martin employees work in South Carolina, and over one thousand retirees are living in the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, South Carolina has a strong and continuing legacy as a patriotic state and is home to numerous military bases; and

Whereas, investing in the technological superiority of our military is a fitting honor to the millions of citizens of South Carolina and the United States who have served our nation by protecting our freedom through military service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize the importance of the F‑16 and F‑35 to the United States and South Carolina and encourage continued support for these important military aviation programs.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the South Carolina Congressional Delegation to express the high regard the South Carolina Senate holds for Lockheed Martin and the F‑16 and F‑35 programs, recognizing their importance to our security and economic growth, both nationally and in South Carolina.

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