

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 63

BY SENATOR ERDEY AND REPRESENTATIVE POPE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend the 2017-2018 Walker High School Wildcats boys basketball team on winning the Louisiana High School Athletic Association Class 5A state championship, an historic accomplishment for this team, its school, and its city.

WHEREAS, for the first time in the history of the boys basketball program at Walker High School in Walker, Louisiana, the team brought home the state championship trophy with a win over defending champion Landry-Walker High School of Algiers, Louisiana, in the 2017-2018 championship game for the Louisiana High School Athletic Association Class 5A; and

WHEREAS, the championship game was a perfectly fitting final act for the season, an awesome come-from-behind overtime win for the Walker Wildcats by a score of sixty-two to fifty-seven; and

WHEREAS, while the entire city of Walker was cheering the basketball team on to victory, a fascinating backstory was also in its final act, one that began on a basketball court nine years earlier, with a team of six and seven year olds competing in the Bidy Ball League; and

WHEREAS, that Bidy Ball team finished second in the nation, losing the final game by only a single point, but the members of that team, their coaches, and their parents, never gave up on the dream of a championship; and

WHEREAS, members of that Bidy Ball team who filled the ranks of the Walker High School squad this year included: Josh and Jalen Cook, Darius Hampton, Dalton Moore, Trent Montgomery, Jalen Perkins, Quaeshon Clark, Calvin Watson, and Le Davis, a group who, by their own admission trust each other implicitly, know each other's

tendencies, and what each other likes to do, as well as how to get everyone involved in the game; none of which is a small component when building a championship team at any level; and

WHEREAS, six Wildcat seniors suited up for the state high school class 5A championship game, who were all veterans of that Bidy Ball game in which they came so close, but fell short by a single point; and

WHEREAS, since the Bidy Ball team members all live in Walker, where most lived near each other, and led by their parents and coaches, Louis Moore, father of player Dalton Moore, and Eric Cook, father of current senior Josh and sophomore, Jalen, continued to enjoy the tutelage of their fathers and all the benefits of playing with a core group of boys who were teammates, but became, also, best friends and are often known as simply "The Walker boys"; and

WHEREAS, Walker Wildcats basketball coach, Anthony Schiro, felt fortunate to welcome these players who were not only good basketball players and athletic young men, but he credits their ironclad bonds of friendship among both the children and their parents with building a trust that continues to serve these players on the basketball court and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Coach Schiro continued, saying that the reputation of the Walker boys, who were dedicated cadre of both well-coached, hard working, and physically gifted basketball players, preceded them as they dominated at every level and he looked forward to the challenge of integrating them into his Wildcat program; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the city of Walker as a whole watched and waited for this exceptional group of young men to emerge on the high school basketball scene and make their mark in Wildcat boys basketball history; and

WHEREAS, with the pressure to achieve from outside the school confines which was considerable, that anticipation of others was secondary to what the Walker boys expected of themselves; a championship at the state level was the only acceptable outcome; and

WHEREAS, the guidance of Coach Schiro, his assistants Eric Cook and Connor Locke, all three Walker natives and alumni of the high school, and assistant coach Donnie Goodson, who has worked for Schiro his entire tenure at Walker High School,

merged this core of players with other talented role players to form a cohesive and, eventually, very successful team; and

WHEREAS, Jalen Cook, though younger than some of the Bidy Ball team, was the hub of that team, and this year at Walker High School he, and other Bidy Ball participants, joined Jacobi Scott, Jordan Hoggatt, Graham Smith, Brian Thomas Jr., and Keondre Brown rounding out this championship squad; and

WHEREAS, the result of so much time spent playing basketball together and becoming best friends in the process, it could be said, was the creation of a team with players who could regularly finish each other's sentences off the court and who possessed an innate understanding of each other and a familiarity when they stepped on the basketball court; and

WHEREAS, in the 2016-2017 season the Wildcats won a playoff game for the first time since 2000, and while they advanced no further that year, the stage was set for a monumental senior push toward that ultimate goal of a state championship for Walker High School; and

WHEREAS, in 2017-2018 Walker earned their berth in the championship game with a dominant state semifinal victory over Natchitoches Central by an overwhelming score of eighty-nine to sixty-three, setting the stage for what turned out to be a dramatic championship performance; and

WHEREAS, the bittersweet aspect of playing their last game together after more than nine years as teammates, was washed away with a come-from-behind overtime victory, the most exciting way to win any basketball game; and

WHEREAS, in the season that brought all dreams to fruition, individual achievements were reached: Dalton Moore was the first of four Wildcats to score more than one thousand points in his high school career and Darius Hampton also reached the one thousand point threshold in the semifinal game against Natchitoches Central, by scoring a season high twenty-one points; and

WHEREAS, additionally, underclassmen Jalen Cook led the team with an average of eighteen points scored per game and Brian Thomas knocked in twenty points and grabbed eight rebounds on his way to being voted the Most Valuable Player of the championship game, a particularly notable an achievement for a freshman; and

WHEREAS, from the nucleus of the Bidy Ball team when the players were six and seven years old, through many years of playing together on the basketball court and building friendships that transcended basketball, with the addition of key newcomers, and dedicated coaches, the Walker High School Wildcats saw their years of commitment, hard work, and brotherhood result in the dream of their young lives being realized, that they are the 2017-2018 Louisiana High School Athletic Association Class 5A state champions, a distinction to last a lifetime and a proud first for their school and their city.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the 2017-2018 Walker High School Wildcats boys basketball team on winning the Louisiana High School Athletic Association Class 5A state championship, an historic accomplishment for this team, its school, and its city.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Coach Anthony Schiro in care of Walker High School in Walker, Louisiana.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES