

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 139

BY SENATOR HARRIS

COMMENDATIONS. Commends and congratulates St. Mary's Academy seniors Calcea Johnson and Ne'Kiya Jackson for presenting their trigonometric proof of the Pythagorean Theorem at a sectional meeting of the American Mathematical Society.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend and congratulate St. Mary's Academy seniors Calcea Johnson and Ne'Kiya
3 Jackson for presenting their theory titled "An Impossible Proof of Pythagoras" at the
4 American Mathematical Society's (AMS) Annual Southeastern Conference.

5 WHEREAS, the two St. Mary's Academy seniors in New Orleans presented their
6 theory on the Pythagorean Theorem at the AMS Annual Southeastern Conference on
7 March 18, 2023, at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia; and

8 WHEREAS, Johnson and Jackson's theory has contributed to mathematical
9 advancement on a conundrum that has stumped mathematicians for over 2,000 years; and

10 WHEREAS, the Pythagorean Theorem states that the sum of the squared sides of a
11 right triangle equals the length of the hypotenuse squared, in algebraic terms, written as:
12 $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$; and

13 WHEREAS, mathematicians believed that proving the theorem with trigonometry
14 would constitute a failure of logic known as "circular reasoning"; and

15 WHEREAS, Johnson and Jackson state that their theory proves the Pythagorean
16 Theorem can be proven by using trigonometry "without the circular reasoning" results; and

17 WHEREAS, the duo's finding may be significant considering that the standard
18 Pythagorean Theorem is used on an everyday basis in professions like architecture, building

1 construction, navigation, spaceflight, computer sciences, and more; and

2 WHEREAS, it is very important to celebrate and recognize that these two young
3 African-American women, in high school, presented their math research theory at a major
4 conference where most presenters are in college or above; and

5 WHEREAS, Catherine Roberts, executive director at AMS says "The next step for
6 Johnson and Jackson is to submit their theory to a peer-review journal, where members of
7 the math community will examine their results to determine if their proof is a correct
8 contribution to the mathematics literature."; and

9 WHEREAS, while representing African Americans, a severely under represented
10 group in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, Johnson and Jackson
11 plan to submit their theory to a peer-review journal, graduate this spring, and pursue
12 professions in environmental engineering and biochemistry; and

13 WHEREAS, when asked about their achievement thus far, the duo say "they are
14 excited just to be a part of the process because there's just nothing like being able to do
15 something that people don't think young people can do" and Johnson adds, "A lot of the time
16 you see this stuff, you don't see kids like us doing it."; and

17 WHEREAS, we celebrate these early career mathematicians for sharing their work
18 with the national mathematics community.

19 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
20 does hereby commend and congratulate St. Mary's Academy seniors Calcea Johnson and
21 Ne'Kiya Jackson for presenting their theory titled, "An Impossible Proof of Pythagoras" at
22 the American Mathematical Society's Annual Southeastern Conference, and does hereby
23 record for posterity their accomplishment, and extends best wishes for continued success and
24 happiness in their future endeavors.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
26 Ms. Calcea Johnson and Ms. Ne'Kiya Jackson.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Ann S. Brown.

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