

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1361

By Fritts

A RESOLUTION to honor the coaches and members of the Roane County High School Lady Jackets girls' soccer team on an excellent 2023 season.

WHEREAS, we take great pleasure in recognizing those coaches and student athletes who, through hard work and determination, have lifted their respective programs to the very acme of sporting competition; and

WHEREAS, the Roane County High School (RCHS) girls' soccer program made its debut in 2001, with Elik Pickell serving as the first coach; during the "building" years, Coach Pickell had barely enough players to field a team, and the Lady Jackets experienced several challenging seasons; and

WHEREAS, a new era began in the fall of 2015 when Ellen Daily assumed the coaching responsibilities of the RCHS girls' soccer team and continued when Alex Lunsford joined the program in the fall of 2016 as her assistant; and

WHEREAS, with the help of parents of student athletes and in collaboration with the City of Kingston Parks and Recreation, the home soccer field and its facilities at Southwest Point were greatly improved; the community continues to be an essential part of the Lady Jackets soccer team's success as the fan base, support, and community engagement continue to grow; and

WHEREAS, the RCHS athletic program has supported the girls' soccer team by providing access to resources for preparing off-season workouts, fundraising efforts, and schedule preparation coaching sessions; coaches of other teams have willingly and proudly given of their free time to welcome the female soccer athletes to the athletic program as a whole; and

WHEREAS, for the last two years, the Lady Jackets soccer team, along with the RCHS male soccer players, have developed a "grow your own" soccer camp program, allowing students to learn fundamental soccer skills, engage with soccer student athletes, and learn basics of effective team building within the sport; the Lady Jackets soccer team is looking forward to hosting its third annual skills-based camp event for children of the community in 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Jackets soccer program began to attain its much-deserved and fought-for success in 2020; the team finished the season 9-2-2 and won the district championship, but their season ended with a loss in the region finals; and

WHEREAS, 2021 brought forth another successful season, as the Lady Jackets' record of 13-0-2 was an all-time school record and an incredible achievement for the program; a second district championship was secured, and the team finished as regional runner-up to participate in the sectional tournament; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Lady Jackets ended regular-season play with a record of 10-2 and then won both the district and region championships to earn the right to host a sectional game, in which they bested Polk County 5-0 to qualify for the state tournament; and

WHEREAS, competing in the state soccer tournament for the first time in twenty-two years, the Lady Jackets beat Cascade 6-0 in the quarterfinals to advance; and

WHEREAS, playing against the eventual state champions in the semifinal round, the Lady Jackets came up just short in a 2-1 loss to finish this magical season with an outstanding 16-3 record; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Jackets' superb performance would not have been possible without the stellar leadership of head coach, Ellen Dailey, who was named Region 1-A Coach of the Year, and assistant coach Alex Lunsford; and

WHEREAS, each of the RCHS female soccer student athletes contributed significantly to the overall success of the team; the young women who are proud to call themselves Lady Jackets are senior captains, Aubree Burns and Myka Gyolai; seniors, Ava Conway and Alexis Hamilton; junior captains, Maddie Bailey and Addison Roberts; juniors, Josie Bailey and Kyleigh Hall; sophomores, Bella Benny, Emery Conway, Shea Gyolai, Ellie Layne, Ava Jane Sandoval, Erica Stone, and Isabella Tejada; and freshmen, Troi Boshears, Eva Blankenship, and Alex Roney; and

WHEREAS, the individual gifted players who made up this remarkable squad won a multitude of post-season awards; and

WHEREAS, Ava Conway was named District 2-A Co-Most Valuable Player, and Alex Roney was honored as Co-Freshman Player of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Maddie Bailey, Aubree Burns, Ava Conway, Emery Conway, Addie Roberts, Alex Roney, and Ava Jane Sandoval were named to the All-District first team, and Bella Benny and Ellie Layne were All-District second team honorees; and

WHEREAS, Ava Conway, a senior center midfielder who scored 13 goals and handed out 15 assists, was named the region's Most Valuable Player, and Emery Conway, a sophomore forward who scored 39 goals and had 6 assists, was honored as the region's Offensive Most Valuable Player; and

WHEREAS, Ava Conway, Emery Conway, Alex Roney, Ava Jane Sandoval, Addison Roberts, Maddie Bailey, and Myka Gyolai were named to the All-Region first team; and

WHEREAS, Ava Conway and Emery Conway were named to the THSSCA Division I Class A All-State team and the All-5 Star Preps girls' soccer team; and

WHEREAS, in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* All-Prep Xtra 2023 Season Awards, Ava Conway was named to the first team, and Emery Conway and Alex Roney were second team honorees; and

WHEREAS, Roane County High School, the Kingston community, and the school district area are all extremely proud of the hard work, dedication, and perseverance of this team and look forward to the Lady Jackets continuing to elevate the program in future seasons while promoting the sport in Kingston and Roane County; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the Roane County High School Lady Jackets for their outstanding season on the soccer pitch; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the coaches and members of the Roane County High School Lady Jackets girls' soccer team on winning district and region championships and reaching the semifinals of the 2023 state tournament and extend to them our best wishes for every continued success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.