

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 121

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Katlyn Vacanti on being named a State Honoree of the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Award.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly pause in their deliberations to salute those young citizens who, through their remarkable efforts, have distinguished themselves as emerging community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Katlyn Vacanti, an esteemed resident of Brentwood and a junior at Ravenwood High School, has been selected as one of two State Honorees of the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Award; and

WHEREAS, this prestigious award, presented by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, honors young volunteers across America who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to serving their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, in November of 2008, all public and private middle level and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs, and affiliates of HandsOn Network, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award; and

WHEREAS, more than 5,000 Local Honorees were then reviewed by an independent judging panel, which selected State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists based on criteria such as personal initiative, creativity, effort, impact, and personal growth; and

WHEREAS, chosen as a 2009 State Honoree, Miss Vacanti will receive a \$1,000 award, an engraved silver medallion, and a trip to Washington, D.C., from May 2 through May 5, 2009, for a series of national recognition events; and

WHEREAS, while undergoing treatment for leukemia at Vanderbilt Hospital, Ms. Vacanti realized that, for some of the families of children receiving long-term medical treatment, the costs of simple things like meals and telephone calls can become onerous, creating anxiety and discord at a time when a child's health should be the sole focus; and

WHEREAS, despite the difficulties and discomfort imposed by her own chemotherapy, Katlyn Vacanti worked with hospital officials to establish a fund that would collect donations to pay for hot food, cell phones, and calling cards for those families who could not afford them; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Vacanti appealed for contributions in a number of speeches, in newspaper and radio interviews, and on the internet, through a web site her father helped her develop; and

WHEREAS, the success of her campaign has allowed Katlyn's program to expand; Cook Children's Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas, now also participates with Katlyn's charity to help the families of critically ill children; and

WHEREAS, according to Ms. Vacanti, she was raised to help those in need when they need her, rather than when it happens to be convenient for her; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee, the strength of our communities, and the overall vitality of American society depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of young people like Katlyn Vacanti who use their considerable talents and resources to serve others, even at a young age; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Katlyn Vacanti on being recognized as a State Honoree of the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, thank her for her selfless and courageous dedication to community service, and extend to her our best wishes for continued success in all her 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.