

By: Representative Miles

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 67

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE EAST RANKIN ACADEMY LADY PATRIOTS
2 VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF
3 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (MAIS) AAAA DIVISION II STATE CHAMPIONSHIP AND
4 FOR THEIR TREMENDOUS PERSEVERANCE IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY.

5 WHEREAS, after a season of unimaginable loss and heartbreak,
6 the East Rankin Academy Lady Patriots Varsity Basketball Team
7 reigned victorious at the MAIS AAAA Division II State
8 Championship, displaying outstanding team spirit and true
9 perseverance in the face of overwhelming tragedy; and

10 WHEREAS, playing with full hearts and incredible amounts of
11 finesse and might, the Lady Patriots outplayed and ultimately
12 outlasted the Lamar School Lady Raiders, winning convincingly by a
13 score of 50-30; and

14 WHEREAS, the Lady Raiders struggled to get going offensively,
15 as the Lady Patriots stopped the dynamic inside 1-2 punch of
16 Lamar's Ambreah Waters and Debreasha Powers, and East Rankin's
17 Bailey Thompson knocked in 10 points to give the Lady Patriots a
18 16-12 lead at the end of the first quarter; and



19 WHEREAS, the Lady Raiders had a strong defensive performance,
20 but the Lady Patriots outscored them in the second quarter for a
21 22-17 halftime lead, and in the third quarter the Lady Patriots
22 outscored Lamar 16-4 to take command of the game at 38-21 going
23 into the fourth quarter, with Brooke Turnage scoring 9 points
24 inside, as the constant pounding of the ball by the Lady Patriots
25 took its toll on the Lady Raiders, who ultimately could not
26 overcome the Lady Patriots' suffocating defense and were outscored
27 12-9 in the final eight minutes; and

28 WHEREAS, with extraordinary strength through troubling times,
29 the Lady Patriots had a successful season in the wake of
30 tragically losing a dearly loved teammate on December 23, 2017,
31 when the Lady Patriots gathered for a Christmas party in Brandon,
32 Mississippi, and around midnight, sisters Brooke and Leah
33 Cunningham were involved in an automobile accident after they left
34 the party, with Leah passing away and Brooke spending numerous
35 weeks at both University of Mississippi Medical Center and
36 Methodist Rehabilitation before being released in February; and

37 WHEREAS, the Lady Patriots displayed tremendous character
38 after the heartbreak of losing their beloved teammate and friend,
39 and they stuck together as a team and held each other up as they
40 laid to rest their cherished teammate on December 27, and to honor
41 Leah during the championship game, the team wore a memorial patch
42 with her No. 14 on their jerseys and wore shooting shirts in her
43 favorite color; and



44 WHEREAS, Head Coach Rod Delaney stated that the girls never
45 gave up and continued to honor their teammate by the way they
46 played the game, which made them true champions, and the Lady
47 Patriots showed tremendous strength of character not only by the
48 way they carried themselves as young women, but also by honoring
49 Leah during their first game after the accident by carrying out
50 her jersey and by carrying Leah and Brooke in their hearts
51 throughout the season; and

52 WHEREAS, the Lady Patriots were hit with another hardship
53 during their game at Copiah Academy on February 9, 2018, when a
54 father of one of the players on the boys team, Mr. Stokes, passed
55 out in the bathroom and was resuscitated by Lee Dawkins, another
56 East Rankin parent, and to ensure that proper care was given to
57 Mr. Stokes, the game was paused several times, and once again, the
58 girls displayed the heart of champions as they gathered together
59 as a team and lifted up Mr. Stokes in prayer; and

60 WHEREAS, true champions are made and molded during trying
61 times of adversity, and through their exceptional devotion to the
62 team and their outstanding determination in the midst of
63 unimaginable hardship, these young ladies truly deserve the title
64 of champions; and

65 WHEREAS, the Lady Patriots finished their outstanding season
66 with a 29-6 record, and the key to their success this season was
67 the exceptional dedication and tremendous team spirit by the
68 following student-athletes: Bailey Thompson, Riley Scoles, Mollie



69 Macon, Brooke Turnage, Taylor Turman, Rachel Dearman, Lauren
70 Parker, Paige Loper, Neely Brunt, Kariana Simmons, Brooke
71 Cunningham, Emilee Tadlock, Macy Leach, Harley Bowman, Anna Claire
72 Shamburger, Kealey Bradford, Maile Tubbs, Anna Grace Boykin, Hanna
73 Caldwell and Adyson Tadlock; and

74 WHEREAS, the Lady Patriots were exceptionally coached and
75 tremendously inspired by Head Coach Rod Delaney and Assistant
76 Coaches Grant Thompson, Trudy Case Dawkins and Seth Cheatham, each
77 having broadened the team's knowledge of the game and refined
78 their skills in execution; and

79 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
80 commend outstanding student-athletes, especially those such as the
81 East Rankin Academy Lady Patriots Varsity Basketball Team, whose
82 dedication to their team and tremendous perseverance and
83 determination in the midst of heartbreak and loss bring honor to
84 their school, their community and to the State of Mississippi:

85 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
86 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
87 commend the East Rankin Academy Lady Patriots Varsity Basketball
88 Team for winning the Mississippi Association of Independent
89 Schools AAAA Division II State Championship and for their
90 tremendous perseverance in the midst of tragedy.

91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
92 furnished to Headmaster Dan R. Boyce, Head Coach Rod Delaney, the



93 family of Leah and Brooke Cunningham and to the members of the
94 Capitol Press Corps.

