

By: Representative Scott

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 143

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE 2023-2024
2 LAUREL HIGH SCHOOL LADY GOLDEN TORNADOES BASKETBALL TEAM UPON
3 WINNING THE 2024 MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION
4 CLASS 5A STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.

5 WHEREAS, the Laurel High School Lady Golden Tornadoes
6 Basketball Team reigned supreme after finishing the 2023-2024
7 season with an impressive 28-3 record, and capturing the 2024
8 Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) Class 5A
9 State Basketball Championship, claiming the program's second state
10 title in four years after taking home the golden basketball in
11 2021; and

12 WHEREAS, throughout their season, the Lady Golden Tornadoes
13 played with clear eyes, full hearts and unimaginable amounts of
14 strength, and during the state championship game at the
15 Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson, Mississippi, on Friday, March 1,
16 2024, their mental stamina and athletic prowess never wavered from
17 the moment they first hustled onto the court until the final
18 buzzer, as they outlasted, outplayed and ultimately overpowered



19 Canton High School Lady Tigers, capitalizing on the Tigers' errors
20 with a domineering 40-32 win; and

21 WHEREAS, to claim this illustrious victory, the team relied
22 on their swift feet, accurate shooting and strategic defensive
23 moves to stop the opposing offense and outmaneuver their defense,
24 which ultimately allowed them to bring home the highly coveted
25 golden basketball, as evidenced by the dynamic contributions of
26 sophomore forward, Kayllis Walker with a domineering 17 points, 12
27 rebounds, three steals and two blocks, which earned her MVP
28 honors, followed by junior guard Marissa Ulmer, netting nine
29 points for the Lady Golden Tornadoes; and

30 WHEREAS, during the championship game, the Lady Golden
31 Tornadoes kept their focus and played one of their best games of
32 the season, despite Canton taking the 3-0 lead after the jump
33 ball, Laurel responded with a 9-0 run and took a 9-5 lead into the
34 second quarter, but created some separation during the second
35 quarter with a 26-9 lead at halftime; and

36 WHEREAS, in the return after the half, Laurel hustled out of
37 the tunnel and led by as many as 20 points in the third quarter,
38 before Canton found life late in the quarter with an 8-0 run to
39 trim the Lady Golden Tornadoes' lead to 33-21 entering the fourth
40 quarter, wherein the Lady Golden Tornadoes limited their mistakes
41 to sealing the team's fate as eventual champions; and



42 WHEREAS, the Laurel High School Lady Golden Tornadoes
43 Basketball Team is comprised of the following talented athletes:
44 senior shooting guard Takiyah Thames, junior guard Zyavia McCray,
45 senior point guard Marissa Ulmer, junior shooting guard Kalasia
46 Carter, sophomore small forward Deshunna Patrick, senior shooting
47 guard Savannah Gant, sophomore shooting guard Madisun McKenzie,
48 sophomore guard Takaylen Dean, junior shooting guard/point guard
49 Neveah Gressett, sophomore forward/guard Autumn McGill, senior
50 center Laniyah Abney, sophomore forward Kayllis Walker and
51 sophomore shooting guard/point guard Zykeria Evans; and team
52 managers, junior Deborah Johns and sophomore De'Ajania Keyes; and

53 WHEREAS, in addition to the remarkable efforts by the team,
54 which earned the distinction of being a scholar athlete team for
55 the second consecutive year, several members of the Lady Tornadoes
56 received individual accolades, including: Savannah Gant
57 being named the MHSAA 5A Girls Basketball Scholar Athlete; Kayllis
58 Walker earning Region 4-5A Most Valuable Player; Zykeria Evans
59 being named Region 4-5A Offensive Player of the Year; Marissa
60 Ulmer being named Region 4-5A Defensive Player of the Year;
61 and Savannah Gant and Takiyah Thames earning All-Region 4-5A
62 honors; and

63 WHEREAS, the Lady Golden Tornadoes have been superbly coached
64 and inspired by Head Coach Sherri Cooley, who was named Region
65 4-5A Coach of the Year for the second consecutive year, and
66 assistant coaches Kristie McKinley and Shasta Husband, who have



67 broadened the players' knowledge of the game and refined their
68 skills in execution and embarking upon building a legacy of
69 superior play and true sportsmanship forged by the tenacious and
70 undaunted spirit of each team member, as evidenced in their
71 ability to produce high caliber players, plays and undoubtedly, by
72 the team's successful season; and

73 WHEREAS, the members of this team will carry the
74 unforgettable memories they made along their way to championship
75 status, as well as the lessons of hard work, dedication and
76 perseverance learned during this amazing season, throughout their
77 lives as they are constantly flooded with the feeling of greatness
78 that accompanies being a champion; and

79 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
80 recognize and commend excellence, especially that displayed by the
81 Laurel High School Lady Golden Tornadoes Basketball Team, and it
82 is with great pride that we congratulate this elite group of
83 student-athletes and Head Coach Sherri Cooley, who have brought
84 honor to their school, community and to the great State of
85 Mississippi:

86 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
87 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
88 commend and congratulate the 2023-2024 Laurel High School Lady
89 Golden Tornadoes Basketball Team upon winning the 2024 Mississippi
90 High School Activities Association (MHSAA) Class 5A State



91 Basketball Championship, and extend best wishes for continued
92 success in all their future endeavors.

93 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
94 furnished to Head Coach Sherri Cooley on the team's behalf, the
95 Laurel School District Board of Trustees and to the members of the
96 Capitol Press Corps.

