SENATE RESOLUTION NO.  49

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE LAUREL HIGH
SCHOOL "LADY TORNADOES" GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM AND HEAD COACH
SHERRI COOLEY FOR WINNING THEIR FIRST-EVER MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION CLASS 5A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP.

WHEREAS, in a season of firsts, the Laurel High School "Lady
Tornadoes" Girls Basketball Team reached the ultimate milestone on
March 5, 2021. The Lady Tornadoes survived Holmes County Central
39-36 at the "Big House" in Jackson to claim the program's
first-ever State Championship; and

WHEREAS, fans sprung into action to support their teams after
Covid restrictions were lifted, and the result was reminiscent of
past Championship weeks. Laurel jumped out to a 37-30 lead in the
fourth quarter before the Lady Jaguars stormed back to make it a
one-point game with less than a minute to play. Holmes had an
opportunity for its first lead of the game in the waning seconds
but missed both attempts at the free-throw line. Laurel senior
Zoey Cooley was a cool customer at the other end of the court,
sinking two free throws to give the Lady Tornadoes a 39-36 cushion
with 5.4 seconds remaining. Forced to go the full length of the
court, the Lady Jaguars fumbled the ball out of bounds and victory fell into the hands of Laurel High School; and

WHEREAS, senior Mackenzie Thomas earned the game's "Most Valuable Player" Award with nine points to lead the Lady Tornadoes. Her fellow Jones College signee Cooley added eight points; and

WHEREAS, "They bought into working hard in June," said Laurel Head Coach Sherri Cooley. "We could not get in the gym to shoot the ball but they were able to get in the weight room and they did it. And I told them if we do this, we can play in March for the State Championship. And they believed, they bought into our system and they worked hard. They deserve it"; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Tornadoes Girls Basketball Team Roster is: Savannah Gant, Kennidi Dean, Manaca Keyes, Mackenzie Thomas, Marissa Ulmer, Takiyah Thames, Zoey Cooley, Morgan Evans, Genesis Jackson, Alexus Lindsey, Kassidy Ulmer, Erialle Gant, Takiah Wright; and Head Coach Sherri Cooley; Coaches Kristie McKinley, Nicole Barnes, Shasta Husband and Randy Pettis; and Manager Ke'ara Cooley; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize a group of student athletes who have brought honor to their school, their community and to the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and congratulate the Laurel High School "Lady Tornadoes" Girls Basketball Team and Head Coach
Sherri Cooley for winning their first-ever MHSAA Class 5A State Championship, and extend to the team, coaches, parents and sponsors our best wishes for future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Coach Sherri Cooley and Laurel Principal Dr. Mark Guidry for the team, forwarded to the Jones County Board of Education, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ST: Commend Laurel High School "Lady Tornadoes" Girls Basketball Team for first-ever State Championship.