

Chapter No. 2030
16/HR26/R758
CST / AM

***HOUSE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 51***

Originated in House  Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 51

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING SARAH THOMAS UPON BECOMING THE FIRST FULL-TIME FEMALE OFFICIAL IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

WHEREAS, Sarah Bailey Thomas, a trailblazing pioneer from Pascagoula, Mississippi, and an inspiration to women throughout the Magnolia State and the United States of America, became the National Football League's first full-time female game official when she made her historical debut during a preseason game between the Arizona Cardinals and Kansas City Chiefs; and

WHEREAS, born in 1973 in Pascagoula, Mississippi, Sarah has excelled in sports since she was young, lettering five times in softball at Pascagoula High School, and she attended the University of Mobile on a basketball scholarship, where she was focused on the game as well as her grades, garnering her the elite title of academic all-American; and

WHEREAS, Sarah accepted the role and immense pressure that accompanies the position of NFL official with invaluable experience on her side, as she began her officiating career after

graduating from college in 1995, initially making the calls for grade school games before escalating to high school varsity games, making her first calls in that level of athletic competition talent in 1999; and

WHEREAS, Gerry Austin, Conference USA's coordinator of officials and a former NFL official himself, invited Sarah to attend an officials camp in 2006, and by the end of the camp, Mr. Austin was so impressed with her natural ability to officiate effectively and courageously making the tough calls fairly that he hired her for the Conference USA staff; and

WHEREAS, despite the acceptance of a female official in the male-dominated sport of football, Sarah's journey has been met with several obstacles, including being required by the league to wear her hair in a ponytail to "blend in" with the other officials, but through it all, she believes in herself and her ability to do the job she loves with skill and precision; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Sarah expanded the horizons for women everywhere when she became the first woman to officiate a major college football game, the Memphis and Jacksonville State game, and by 2009, five other women had become officials in major college football leagues, and Sarah was chosen to officiate the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl, making her the first woman to officiate a bowl game; and

WHEREAS, Sarah has received the loving support of her wonderful husband, Brian, and three children, Bridley, Brady and

Bailey, throughout her career, and serves as a full-time mother and pharmaceutical sales representative when she is not making game-changing calls on the turf; and

WHEREAS, with two brothers who officiate college football games, Sarah credits her Southern heritage for her love of football but relied on her determination and focus to achieve her dream of officiating in the National Football League, and though her journey has been long, her realization is absolutely worth it; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize and commend the lives of fine Mississippians, especially those such as Sarah Thomas, who has inspired women throughout the nation to strive for their dreams despite the challenges and brought glory and honor to this great Magnolia State:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Sarah Thomas upon becoming the first female official in the National Football League, and express best wishes for continued success in all of her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be

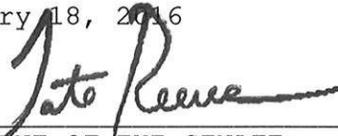
furnished to Sarah Thomas and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 16, 2016



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 18, 2016



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE