

By Senator Gaetz

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Senate Resolution

A resolution honoring the 50th Anniversary of Florida Special Olympics, recognizing Okaloosa County as the birthplace of Florida Special Olympics, and paying tribute to Dr. Charles McFarland and the late Max Bruner, Jr.

WHEREAS, in 1969, a group of dedicated educators and parents, inspired by Eunice Kennedy Shriver and led by Okaloosa County educator Charles McFarland, founded Special Olympics in this state, and

WHEREAS, thanks to the support of Superintendent of Schools Max Bruner, Jr., and the Okaloosa County School Board, Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County 50 years ago became the birthplace of Florida Special Olympics and hosted the first Florida state games and the first Florida winter games, and

WHEREAS, Okaloosa County's Special Olympics Program has won the world championship in girls basketball and boys handball, an international gold medal in skiing, and hundreds of state-level gold medals and state championships in numerous sports, and serves as a teacher and model for other communities in the development of physical education and special education programs for exceptional students, and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, tens of thousands of special athletes from every county in Florida have participated, competed, and excelled in Special Olympics individual and team sports, including alpine skiing, track and field, bocce, cycling, soccer, volleyball, equestrian, aquatics, softball, golf, bowling, gymnastics, powerlifting, roller skating,

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30 basketball, sailing, speed skating, figure skating, and tennis,
31 NOW, THEREFORE,

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33 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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35 That the Senate pays special tribute to Dr. Charles
36 McFarland as the father of Florida Special Olympics and to the
37 late Superintendent Max Bruner, Jr., and the other Okaloosa
38 County pioneers of Special Olympics, and notes their historic
39 contributions to the education of exceptional students and the
40 incalculable value of their leadership to Florida's special
41 children and their parents.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate rises in respect to
43 Florida's special athletes who have run the races, skied the
44 slopes, excelled at the games, persevered in the competition,
45 and proven by their success that ability is more important than
46 disability, that strength of spirit and greatness of heart can
47 overcome adversity, and that performance, despite challenge, can
48 lift lives and inspire the admiration of an entire state.

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
50 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Dr. Charles
51 McFarland as a tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida
52 Senate.