

By Senator Harrell

31-01860-26

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Senate Resolution

A resolution honoring the YMCA to mark the organization's 175th anniversary in the United States.

WHEREAS, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) marks its 175th anniversary in 2026, having been founded in the United States by Thomas Valentine Sullivan at the Old South Church in Boston, Massachusetts, on December 29, 1851, and

WHEREAS, inspired by the YMCA movement in England, the organization has carried on the mission to put Christian principles into practice by building healthy spirit, mind, and body for all, and

WHEREAS, the YMCA has continually adapted to meet the evolving needs of American communities, strengthening society by bringing people together, fostering relationships, and creating a sense of belonging, and

WHEREAS, the YMCA's legacy includes providing safe housing during the Industrial Revolution, pioneering the first night school and English as a Second Language classes, inventing basketball, and providing the first group swim lessons, and

WHEREAS, the YMCA served as the birthplace of Father's Day, with the first celebration held at the YMCA in Spokane, Washington, in 1910; established the Youth and Government program in 1936, a premier civic engagement initiative that continues today; and led humanitarian efforts during wartime, including the work of John R. Mott, YMCA leader and President Woodrow Wilson's General Secretary for the National War Work Council, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946 for undertaking such efforts, and

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WHEREAS, the YMCA has become the nation's leading nonprofit provider of child care and afterschool programs since the 1970s and 1980s to support working families, has served as the leading provider of emergency child care for frontline workers, and was a significant provider of food during the coronavirus pandemic, and

WHEREAS, today, nearly 2,600 YMCAs serve more than 10,000 neighborhoods across every state and territory, with more than 300,000 staff and 350,000 volunteers delivering essential programs to over 17 million people annually, including almost 11 million adults and 6.5 million children and youth, and

WHEREAS, the YMCA is a leader in providing swim lessons, camping programs, youth sports, meal programs, lifestyle health, and fitness and well-being programs, and is the largest provider of fitness programs for older adults, and

WHEREAS, the YMCA serves people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, creating spaces where all people feel welcome, are treated with respect, and find opportunities to connect with their neighbors, and

WHEREAS, YMCAs across the nation are working to build stronger, more connected communities through intentional experiences that help people achieve their goals, foster connection, and promote well-being in order to build relationships and thrive, and

WHEREAS, in 2026, YMCAs nationwide will host special events that celebrate the moments, programs, and people that have shaped their stories, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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60 That the Florida Senate congratulates and expresses
61 appreciation to the YMCA for 175 years of service to the nation.

62 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Senate recognizes
63 the YMCA's role in responding to community needs, connecting and
64 supporting people, and building relationships and a sense of
65 belonging.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Senate commends the
67 hundreds of thousands of staff and volunteers who create
68 connected communities and advance the YMCA's mission to build
69 healthy spirits, minds, and bodies for all.

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Senate encourages
71 continued support for the YMCA's efforts to address social
72 isolation and loneliness by creating places and spaces where
73 people can connect, build relationships, and thrive.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
75 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to the Florida
76 State Alliance of YMCAs as a tangible token of the sentiments of
77 the Florida Senate.