

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Concurrent House Resolution

H.C.R. 97

Offered by Committee on Corrections and Institutions

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Southern State Correctional Facility's debate team on its National Prison Debate League victory over Wake Forest University

Whereas, in an innovative project that Commissioner of Corrections Nicholas Deml described as “show[ing] the transformative power of education,” the Southern State Correctional Facility (SSCF), in association with the National Prison Debate League (NPDL), conducted a semester-long, three-college-credit course instructing the enrollees on the art of collegiate debate, and

Whereas, the NPDL “connects incarcerated individuals with collegiate debate programs, sharpening critical thinking[,]...spurring creativity[,] reduc[ing] recidivism[,] and, ultimately, reshap[ing] lives,” and

Whereas, as the exciting course highlight, six of the SSCF students engaged in a virtually transmitted debate against a student team from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and

Whereas, the topic of the debate was the Norwegian Model of Corrections, “which emphasizes rehabilitation and personal agency,” and each team consulted experts in preparation for the debate, and

Whereas, upon the debate's completion, a panel of independent judges scored all aspects of each team's performance and declared the SSCF team the winner, an outstanding accolade for this correctional facility team, and

Whereas, this well-deserved victory is attributed both to the SSCF debaters' dedication and studiousness and to the NPDL's intensive four-month curriculum “focused on civic engagement, empowerment, conflict resolution, research skills, and peer leadership,” and

Whereas, the course's success reflects NPDL Executive Director Daniel Throop's observation that “there are no inferior minds, only unequal opportunities,” *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the Southern State Correctional Facility's debate team on its National Prison Debate League victory over Wake Forest University, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Commissioner of Corrections, the Superintendent of the Southern State Correctional Facility, and each member of the winning team.