

2017 SESSION

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 316

Offered January 17, 2017

Commending LeShawn Merritt.

Patron—Lucas

WHEREAS, LeShawn Merritt of Portsmouth proudly represented the United States and the Commonwealth at the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, winning a gold medal in the men's 4x400-meter relay and a bronze medal in the men's 400-meter race; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong resident of Portsmouth, LeShawn Merritt graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School, where he recorded what was then the second-fastest 400-meter indoor race time; he attended East Carolina University, before becoming a professional sprinter at the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, LeShawn Merritt became only the ninth man in history to break the 44-second barrier in the men's indoor 400-meter race; he has won 11 world championship medals, including the gold medal in the 4x400-meter relay event at the 2015 IAAF World Championships in Beijing; and

WHEREAS, during the 2016 Olympic Games, LeShawn Merritt finished the 400-meter race with a time of 43.85 seconds to claim the bronze medal; after recovering from an injury, he ran in the final of the men's 4x400-meter relay and helped the team win the gold medal by an impressive .86-second margin; and

WHEREAS, a three-time Olympian, LeShawn Merritt also participated in the 2012 Olympic Games in London and the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, where he earned two gold medals in the 4x400-meter relay and the 400-meter race, which he won by the largest margin in that event since 1896; and

WHEREAS, throughout his track and field career and during the Olympic Games, LeShawn Merritt has enjoyed the enthusiastic support of his family, friends, coaches, and the members of the Portsmouth community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend LeShawn Merritt on winning a gold medal in the men's 4x400-meter relay and a bronze medal in the men's 400-meter race at the Games of the XXXI Olympiad; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to LeShawn Merritt as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his outstanding achievements as a member of Team USA.

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