

1 A RESOLUTION welcoming Kenny Payne back to the Commonwealth upon his
2 selection as Head Men's Basketball Coach at the University of Louisville.

3 WHEREAS, Kenneth Victor Payne, a native of Laurel, Mississippi, played his high
4 school basketball at nearby Northeast Jones High School where, during his senior year in
5 1985, he was named Mississippi's Mr. Basketball as well as a Parade Second Team All-
6 American; and

7 WHEREAS, recruited by Hall of Fame head coach Denny Crum, Kenny Payne took
8 his talents to the University of Louisville where, during his freshman year, he helped the
9 Cardinals win their second-ever national championship in 1986; and

10 WHEREAS, Kenny Payne served in a reserve role in his first two years but
11 eventually became a regular starter. As a senior, he averaged 14.5 points, 5.7 rebounds
12 and 2.1 assists per game, while shooting 50.8 percent from the field and 42.9 percent on
13 three-point attempts, and was named to the Second Team All-Metro Conference; and

14 WHEREAS, Kenny Payne finished his Louisville career with 1,083 points, 476
15 rebounds, and 143 assists; and a career shooting percentage of 46.9 percent and 40.1
16 percent on three-point attempts; and

17 WHEREAS, following his senior year, Kenny Payne was drafted by the
18 Philadelphia 76ers as the 19th overall pick in the first round of the 1989 NBA Draft,
19 where he played for three plus seasons; and

20 WHEREAS, after the NBA, Kenny Payne's basketball odyssey included overseas
21 stops in Italy, Japan, Brazil, the Philippines, Cypress, China, and Argentina prior to his
22 playing career concluding in 2000 after a season with Australia's Cairns Taipans; and

23 WHEREAS, after his playing career ended, Kenny Payne came back to the
24 University of Louisville to finish his degree, earning a bachelor's of science in sport
25 administration in 2003; and

26 WHEREAS, Kenny Payne began his coaching career in 2004, when he was hired by
27 head coach Ernie Kent to be an assistant coach at the University of Oregon; and

1 WHEREAS, during his five years at Oregon, Kenny Payne helped get the Ducks
2 back to national relevance, with Oregon making two NCAA Tournament appearances and
3 one Elite Eight, as well as winning only their second-ever PAC-10 Conference
4 Championship; and

5 WHEREAS, Kenny Payne quickly established a reputation as an elite recruiter, with
6 his final two Ducks' recruiting classes both ranked inside the top 15 nationally; and

7 WHEREAS, after five years with Oregon, Kenny Payne became an assistant coach,
8 and later associate head coach, at the University of Kentucky, where he spent a decade as
9 a part of the Wildcats' incredible run of success, during which they compiled a record of
10 295 wins against 74 losses, made four Final Four appearances, and won the national
11 championship in 2012; and

12 WHEREAS, while at Kentucky, Kenny Payne solidified his reputation as one of the
13 top recruiters in the country, and also developed a specialty of instructing post players,
14 helping to mold several big men into NBA players; and

15 WHEREAS, in 2020, Kenny Payne took a job as an assistant coach with the New
16 York Knicks of the National Basketball Association, where his presence was instantly
17 felt, with the Knicks making their first playoff appearance in eight years; and

18 WHEREAS, on March 18th, 2022, Kenny Payne was introduced as the 21st head
19 basketball coach of the University of Louisville, becoming the first African American to
20 hold the job on a permanent basis; and

21 WHEREAS, disembarking from the plane that brought him from New York the day
22 before, Kenny Payne embraced Denny Crum, his former coach and Louisville icon, and
23 told him quietly, "You are one of the reasons I am here."; and

24 WHEREAS, at his introductory press conference, Kenny Payne did not speak of
25 offense schemes or zone versus man-to-man defense, but rather spoke of service,
26 sacrifice, and dedication, referring to the approximately one hundred former Cardinal
27 players from as far back as the 1950s as his "brothers," and stressing that he would need

1 buy-in from everyone for the program to be successful; and

2 WHEREAS, the hiring of Kenny Payne was not only universally praised by
3 basketball experts across the nation, it has also energized a Cardinal fan base that has
4 been buffeted by travails over the past several years; and

5 WHEREAS, Kenny Payne's selection as head coach at the University of Louisville
6 will hopefully usher in a renaissance of Louisville basketball, as they attempt to add to the
7 school's national championships won in 1980, 1986, and 2013;

8 NOW, THEREFORE,

9 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*
10 *Kentucky:*

11 ➔Section 1. The members of this body, both individually and collectively, do
12 hereby join Senator Gerald Neal in welcoming Kenny Payne back home to the
13 Commonwealth, offering their heartiest congratulations upon his selection as head coach
14 of the University of Louisville Men's Basketball Team, and wishing him and his team
15 good fortune in all future endeavors.

16 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this Resolution to
17 Senator Gerald Neal for presentation to Kenny Payne.