

1 A RESOLUTION recognizing and honoring new University of Kentucky Men's
2 Basketball Coach Mark Pope.

3 WHEREAS, former University of Kentucky (UK) basketball player Mark Pope has
4 been selected as the 23rd head coach of UK's storied men's basketball program; and

5 WHEREAS, a native of Bellevue, Washington, where he was an All-State
6 selection, Mark Pope played for the University of Washington for two seasons, where he
7 was the Pac-10 Freshmen of the Year in 1992; and

8 WHEREAS, after his sophomore season, Mark Pope transferred to UK, where he
9 completed his college career, playing every game over two seasons and averaging 7.9
10 points and 5.7 rebounds per games as a key component of a team that won two
11 Southeastern Conference (SEC) regular season championships, the 1995 SEC
12 Tournament Championship, where he was named to the All-Tournament team, and the
13 1996 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) title; and

14 WHEREAS, Mark Pope was a captain of UK's 1996 National Championship squad,
15 one of the greatest teams in modern collegiate basketball history, affectionately known as
16 "The Untouchables" for its dominating season in which it compiled a record of 34 wins
17 against only 2 losses and outscored their six NCAA tournament opponents by an average
18 of 21.5 points per game; and

19 WHEREAS, after graduating from UK in 1996, Mark Pope played for four different
20 teams in the National Basketball Association in a career that lasted for nine seasons; and

21 WHEREAS, following his playing days, Mark Pope attended medical school for
22 two years, then decided to get into coaching, serving as an assistant at Wake Forest,
23 Georgia, and Brigham Young University (BYU) prior to becoming the head coach at
24 Utah Valley University in 2015; and

25 WHEREAS, in 2015, Mark Pope took over a Utah Valley team that won only 11
26 games the prior year, eventually leading them to 20 wins in both his third and fourth
27 years at the school; and

1 WHEREAS, in 2019, Mark Pope was named the head coach at BYU, and in his
2 first season he led the Cougars to 24 wins, the most wins for a first-year coach in program
3 history. His team finished the season ranked 18th in the Associated Press poll and 16th in
4 the USA Today/Coaches poll, and missed out on a certain bid to the NCAA Tournament
5 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

6 WHEREAS, over the past five seasons at BYU, Mark Pope's Cougars have
7 amassed 110 wins against 52 losses, while playing an exciting brand of basketball. This
8 past season the Cougars finished third in the nation in both assists per game and three-
9 point field goals made per game while scoring more than 80 points per game; and

10 WHEREAS, speaking on the hire, UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart said,
11 "Mark Pope not only brings an impressive record in nine years as a head coach, but also a
12 love of the University of Kentucky and a complete understanding of what our program
13 means to the people of our state. As a captain on the '96 championship team, Mark was a
14 beloved and respected teammate. As a head coach, he is highly regarded nationally as an
15 innovator. His teams run a unique and dynamic up-tempo offense and they get after it on
16 defense. He is a strong recruiter with international ties and a person of integrity. He fully
17 embraces our high expectations and standards and I know that as our fans get
18 reacquainted with Mark, they will be eager to join him on what promises to be an
19 exciting ride."; and

20 WHEREAS, the hiring of Mark Pope ushers in a new era of UK hoops that is full of
21 promise, and fans across the Commonwealth eagerly anticipate the future of Wildcat
22 basketball;

23 NOW, THEREFORE,

24 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***
25 ***Kentucky:***

26 ➔Section 1. The members of the Senate join Senator Brandon Storm in
27 congratulating Mark Pope on his selection as the head coach of the UK Men's Basketball

1 team, welcoming him and his family back home to the Commonwealth, and wishing him
2 and his players good fortune in the years to come.

3 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
4 Resolution to Senator Brandon Storm for presentation to Mark Pope.