

2010 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 243

Commending the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 12, 2010

Agreed to by the Senate, February 18, 2010

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has established plans for the release of planning grants for transforming lives and neighborhoods in 20 areas across the nation known as "Promise Neighborhoods"; and

WHEREAS, modeled on the success of the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, grant funds to Promise Neighborhoods will create "cradle to college" pipelines for children and families and strengthen community bonds; and

WHEREAS, a primary goal of the Harlem Children's Zone is to end generational poverty and provide young people and their parents with new social and educational opportunities, including but not limited to parenting education, high-quality preschools, public charter schools, enhanced after-school programs, individualized academic support, and enhanced preparation for college and careers; and

WHEREAS, in the City of Richmond, Virginia's capital, a coalition of community leaders representing the nonprofit, public, and private sectors have been preparing for this potential funding opportunity since early 2009, and together compose the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Planning Committee (the Committee); and

WHEREAS, the Committee includes leaders from many community organizations, including the Better Housing Coalition, Bon Secours Richmond Health System, the City of Richmond, Communities in Schools of Richmond, the East End Partnership with Families, the Jackson Foundation, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, the Partnership for Families Northside, the Peter Paul Development Center, the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation, the Richmond City Public Schools, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the Robins Foundation, The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia, the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems, and the YMCA of Greater Richmond; and

WHEREAS, prior to the planning grant opportunity, the Committee researched and assessed resources and needs across the City of Richmond, using the following demographic indicators: education, income distribution, number of children in the family, home ownership and rental rates, infant mortality and teen pregnancy rates, emergency transports, lead levels in children and housing, and incidence of crime; moreover, effective community agencies, school feeder patterns, and current parental, community, business, local school board, and financial investments in city public schools, and housing developments and city government were reviewed for their potential to contribute to the success of the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Initiative; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Committee's research and review, Richmond's East End community was selected as the site to implement the plan due to the high number of children living in poverty; educational, health, and other risk factors for children; strong resident leadership; and community assets and the potential for development, including affordable housing and commercial development; and

WHEREAS, currently, many civic, educational, public, and private organizations are working with residents to provide and improve opportunities for a successful future for young persons living in Richmond's East End, helping to prepare children for kindergarten and academic success in school; and

WHEREAS, Richmond's East End community provides fertile ground and rich opportunities for the success of the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Initiative, and aligning and coordinating the most effective of the programs offered by these organizations in the neighborhood will vastly increase every child's opportunity to succeed; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the federal grant opportunity will become available early in 2010 and that approximately \$500,000 in planning grant funds may be announced in Spring 2010, with funds becoming available shortly thereafter; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has pledged to work cooperatively on the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Initiative, whether or not it is selected to receive federal funding to implement the plan; and

WHEREAS, the focus of the Committee's plan is the educational achievement of children and it aims to help children reach their full potential through engaged families, community support, and a unified system of public and private opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Initiative is an important, transformational plan that would open the doors to a promising and productive future for countless young people living

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in the city and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, the expressed support of the General Assembly and the assistance of the Secretary of Education would significantly further and aid the City of Richmond and the Committee's efforts to be selected for a Promise Neighborhoods initiative grant; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Initiative; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly commend and support the efforts of the City of Richmond and the Committee to seek the Promise Neighborhoods initiative grant, and call upon the Secretary of Education to support this effort; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the president of the Richmond City Promise Neighborhood Planning Committee as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and appreciation of the Committee's endeavors to aid in the transformation of young lives through opportunities for a successful future and strengthened families and communities.