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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 971

Offered February 21, 2011

Commending the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Patrons—Ebbin, Englin, Hope, Kory and McClellan; Senator: Whipple

WHEREAS, in 2010 the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 10th anniversary of building bridges to create business opportunities to benefit the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, before the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was formed, local Hispanics would meet at one of the Commonwealth's oldest Latino restaurants, La Siesta, owned by the Zajur family; and

WHEREAS, at La Siesta local schoolchildren were given the opportunity to learn more about the Latino culture and Spanish language, eventually creating a sister-city relationship between Richmond and Mexico City; and

WHEREAS, as the Hispanic population grew, local Hispanic leaders recognized the need to create a statewide organization to link the Hispanic community with mainstream commerce in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in 2000 the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was formed and the next year, established its headquarters in Richmond; in 2004 the Chamber opened a branch in Northern Virginia in conjunction with the National Capitol Area Minority Business Development Center; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce began the popular ¿Qué Pasa? Festival of Virginia, one of the largest Latino festivals in the state, to share culture, cuisine, and music in a family-friendly environment; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Michel Zajur, the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce launched the Region-to-Region program to promote international business, a job fair to connect Hispanics and employers, and a foundation to provide the Hispanic community with education and information; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce opened the first Bilingual Information Center in the United States and was named among the top three Hispanic Chambers of Commerce in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has provided clients with technical assistance and information, offered free legal assistance, and become the only Virginia organization to administer a grant from the United States Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency; and

WHEREAS, committed to enhancing the economic well-being of the Commonwealth, the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce played a pivotal role in bringing a Goya Foods distribution plant to Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in preparation for the United States Census in 2010, the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce founded the nation's first Latino Complete Count Committee to ensure the proper counting of Latinos so that the Commonwealth would receive its complete share of federal moneys; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has provided valuable assistance to the Hispanic population, local business communities, and the Commonwealth for the past 10 years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on the occasion of its 10th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and admiration for the Chamber's many contributions to the economic well-being of the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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