

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 430

Commending The Links, Incorporated Central Virginia Cluster.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 23, 2012
 Agreed to by the Senate, February 28, 2012

WHEREAS, The Links, Incorporated, an international, not-for-profit corporation established in 1946 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by homemakers Sarah Strickland Scott and Margaret Roselle Hawkins, became a national organization in June 1949; and

WHEREAS, The Links, Incorporated consists of 12,000 professional women in 274 chapters located in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of African American women who are influential decision makers and opinion leaders committed to enriching and sustaining the culture and ensuring the economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry; and

WHEREAS, with a focus on local communities, members of The Links, Incorporated chapters work as business and civic leaders, mentors, role models, community activists, and volunteers who contribute more than 500,000 hours of community service each year; and

WHEREAS, The Links, Incorporated is organized nationally by geographical regions, and the Central Virginia Cluster consists of five chapters—Petersburg, Richmond, Southside Virginia, James River Valley, and Commonwealth—which focus on programs designed to address local, national, and international education, health care, and other human services issues; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, chartered in 1952 and celebrating 60 years of dedicated service to the Richmond community in March 2012, contributes financially to various local charities and causes, including the Central Virginia Food Bank; the Richmond Fisher House, which supports families of veterans receiving medical treatment at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center; and an endowed chair and a scholarship program at Virginia Union University; and

WHEREAS, the Petersburg Chapter, the seventh oldest chapter of The Links, Incorporated, was organized in 1948; it participates in "Paint It Pink Petersburg," a program devoted to increasing diagnostic breast screenings for needy local women, and "Total U," a multifaceted and multi-dimensional mentoring program for female students at Vernon Johns Junior High School that promotes academic achievement, provides exposure to culturally enriched activities and positive role models, and encourages healthy self-images and positive life choices; and

WHEREAS, the Southside Virginia Chapter provides "Linking Motivators to Achievers," a mentoring program for the children and parents of the Single Parent Program at Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville; it also contributes annually to the United Negro College Fund and works with the Southside Virginia ArtBank to provide cultural programs in Southside Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the James River Valley Chapter, chartered in 1983, serves the Richmond community through comprehensive outreach programs at local elementary public schools that focus on financial literacy, childhood obesity, healthy lifestyles, dining etiquette, academic tutoring, and an appreciation of the arts; it also sponsors the Saks Fifth Avenue "Fashion Experience," an annual fundraiser to support the chapter's community outreach initiatives, which include contributions to the Edwina Hall Endowed Scholarship and sponsorship of the Professional Clothing Closet at Virginia Union University, the Central Virginia Food Bank, local breast cancer organizations, the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, Linwood Holton Elementary School, and Habitat for Humanity International to build a core house in Haiti; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Chapter was chartered in Richmond on June 6, 1998, as the 270th chapter of The Links, Incorporated and the 75th chapter in the Eastern Region, and chapter members have provided more than two million service hours to the community; the chapter provides significant contributions to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Virginia, acknowledges community leaders and an HBCU during the annual Green and White Luncheon, maintains partnerships with the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Baptist General Convention, LifeNet Health, and many other organizations, and sponsors the Young Achievers Program, a national award-winning program offered in the Richmond public schools to address the worsening plight of young African American males by providing program participants support and opportunities to develop the skills essential to complete high school and college and make positive life choices; and

WHEREAS, The Links, Incorporated's unique mission of combining friendship and purposeful service to make history, provide hope, and enrich the community through education and the arts has had positive results in the community, provided support and assistance to assuage educational disadvantage and cultural deprivation, and created opportunities that have allowed members of the organization to use

their talents to help fulfill the hopes and dreams of others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend The Links, Incorporated Central Virginia Cluster; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to Margot James Copeland, National President; Dianne Hardison, Area Director of the Old Dominion (VA) Chapter; and Kelly Harris-Braxton, president of the Richmond Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, requesting that they each further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents in order that they may be apprised of the General Assembly's appreciation of the organization's service to the Commonwealth.