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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 471

Offered March 3, 2014

Commending Friendship Industries Incorporated.

Patrons—Wilt, Bell, Robert B., Gilbert and Landes; Senators: Hanger and Obenshain

WHEREAS, in 1964, a few special education instructors and citizens created the Linville-Edom Sheltered Workshop in an old chicken house of the Agricultural Building of the Linville-Edom School in Rockingham County, for male students who aged out of the high school system, to develop and maintain employment and training opportunities for persons with disabilities in integrated work environments; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, the Linville-Edom Sheltered Workshop evolved into and was incorporated as Friendship Industries Incorporated, the first agency in Harrisonburg and Rockingham Counties to provide employment services for persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Friendship Industries Incorporated began with an operating budget of \$20,000 and employed eight young men with special needs; in 2013, the company's budget was over \$5 million, more than 170 persons with disabilities were served, and over \$3.6 million was contributed to the community in wages, taxes, contract services, job training, and employment services; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, Friendship Industries Incorporated moved to larger quarters in Harrisonburg and remained there for 26 years, where a transportation system was created for all clients, enabling the employment of more persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, Friendship Industries Incorporated pioneered the Supported Competitive Employment Program model in the Harrisonburg and Rockingham area, and persons with disabilities were successfully mainstreamed into jobs in the community with the support of a Friendship Industries Incorporated job coach; and

WHEREAS, from the first enterprise in 1964 to repair wooden crates for the local Coca-Cola bottling plant, Friendship Industries Incorporated has expanded commercial enterprises to partnerships with local businesses and has developed a national customer base that includes a contract with the United States Department of Defense in April 2008, to assemble Escape and Evasion kits for the United States Air Force; a partnership in 2010 with InterChange Group to provide contract packaging services in a refrigerated environment; and, in 2011, the creation of Able Solutions Incorporated to provide employment options for persons with barriers to employment; and

WHEREAS, every year, the scope and variety of commercial work provided by Friendship Industries Incorporated increases, allowing employees to gain a wide variety of job skills, and the support of this employment endeavor by the citizens of Harrisonburg and Rockingham Counties has placed the company in the top 30 employers in the area; and

WHEREAS, Friendship Industries Incorporated's rehabilitation programs give persons with disabilities an opportunity to contribute to their community, obtain employment, and provide income for their families; and

WHEREAS, the effectiveness of Friendship Industries Incorporated's rehabilitation programs has been validated by the Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), and the company has been awarded the highest possible CARF certification for five consecutive review periods, the most recent accreditation in June 2013; and

WHEREAS, for 50 years, Friendship Industries Incorporated has embraced personal choice in matching employees with the right job and its leaders have used a business model to sustain the company's mission of "excellence in nonprofit management, stewardship of community resources, implementation of social enterprise, and empowerment of persons with barriers to success"; and

WHEREAS, Friendship Industries Incorporated has been faithful to its mission to assist persons with disabilities in the Harrisonburg and Rockingham area for 50 years; through the initiation of entrepreneurial projects and commercial enterprise, persons with disabilities have obtained job skills training and employment that enable them to sustain themselves and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Friendship Industries Incorporated; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to George W. Homan, II, president and chief executive officer of Friendship Industries Incorporated, as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and best wishes for continued success in serving the people of the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

INTRODUCED

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