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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 822

Offered February 12, 2015

Commending Henrico County Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc.

Patrons—McClellan, Farrell, Ingram, Loupassi, Massie, McQuinn and O'Bannon; Senator: McEachin

WHEREAS, Henrico County Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc., the only court advocacy program for abused and neglected children in Henrico County, proudly celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2014; and

WHEREAS, a community is only as strong as those individuals and organizations that provide exemplary service, whether through participation in volunteer programs or through good citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Henrico County Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. (Henrico CASA), promotes the idea that all children have the fundamental right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to grow up in the embrace of a loving family; by training and empowering volunteers, Henrico CASA cultivates the power of the community to serve abused and neglected children; and

WHEREAS, the plight of children in foster care and the family court system is one of the biggest human dilemmas; Henrico CASA recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers to represent the needs of abused and neglected children; promotes safe, permanent homes for all children; and seeks to educate the community concerning the needs of abused and neglected children; and

WHEREAS, Henrico CASA volunteers complete an evaluation of each child's circumstances, focusing on the safety and well-being of the child, and help the child and family understand the sometimes confusing court process; and

WHEREAS, Henrico CASA plans to continue to serve all children referred to the agency who have suffered from abuse and neglect or live in foster care and match the children with CASA volunteers who will help them navigate their experiences in the court or foster care system until they are placed in safe, nurturing, and permanent homes; and

WHEREAS, in the past 20 years, Henrico CASA volunteers served more than 2,000 children, donated more than 95,000 hours, and made almost 100,000 case contacts to ensure children are safe from abuse and neglect; Henrico CASA provided residents of the Commonwealth with services valued at over \$2 million; and

WHEREAS, volunteers who enhance the quality of life of various individuals through advocacy, sacrifice their time, place themselves in difficult and challenging situations, and take on the responsibility of appearing before a judge of the court on behalf of a child are models for civic engagement and social responsibility; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Henrico County Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc., on the occasion of its 20th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Henrico County Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its dedicated service to children in the Henrico County community.

INTRODUCED

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