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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 877

Offered February 19, 2015

Commending the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center.

Patrons—Herring and Krupicka; Senators: Barker, Ebbin and Saslaw

WHEREAS, the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center, which provides support to victims of sexual violence, marks its 40th anniversary in 2015; and

WHEREAS, sexual assault is an act of sexual violence and aggression, which occurs when a person is forced, threatened, or coerced into sexual contact without his or her consent, and such act is committed primarily out of anger or a need to feel powerful by controlling, dominating, or humiliating the victim; and

WHEREAS, women, men, and children of any age can be victims of sexual assault; approximately 80 percent of all sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows, such as a friend, spouse, family member, date, coworker, or neighbor; and

WHEREAS, one in four females and one in six males will be sexually assaulted before age 18; survivors of sexual assault may experience various repercussions unique to the individual, including loss of control of his or her life, anger, fear, distrust, anxiety, depression, guilt and self-blame, difficulty in concentrating, insomnia, mood swings, and changed eating patterns; and

WHEREAS, sexual harassment, an unwanted sexual advance, is defined by the target of the harassment and not by the perpetrator, and sexual harassment can occur once or many times, and such incidents may cause the target of the sexual harassment to feel frightened, uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, the Alexandria Commission on the Status of Women (Commission) began extensive research regarding the treatment of rape victims in Alexandria and found that 45,000 rapes were committed annually in the 1970s; also in 1974, 165 rape-related calls were made to the Northern Virginia Hotline and 55 rapes were reported to the Alexandria Police Department; and

WHEREAS, in August 1975, the Commission, working with the Alexandria Police Department, the Mental Health Clinic, the Alexandria Hospital, the Washington, D. C. Rape Crisis Center, and the Commonwealth Attorney's office, founded the Alexandria Rape Victim Companion Program, which initially trained 30 volunteers to provide nonjudgmental support 24 hours a day for rape victims; and

WHEREAS, later in 1975, the Alexandria Rape Victim Companion Program became the Sexual Assault Response and Awareness Program, and in 2011, the program was renamed the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center; and

WHEREAS, staff and volunteers provide services to more than 300 adult and child victims of sexual assault each year and are trained to provide 24-hour crisis intervention, emotional support, advocacy with medical and court services and law enforcement, short-term individual and group counseling, and information and referrals; and

WHEREAS, the Center offers services for individuals of any age, race, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or physical ability who have been sexually assaulted, sexually harassed, or stalked; confidential services are offered in English and Spanish and other languages; and

WHEREAS, the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center is committed to providing safe, secure, impartial, and inclusive services through advocacy, education, and prevention to foster a healthy and thriving community by ensuring the dignity of everyone affected by sexual violence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center hereby be commended on the occasion of its 40th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the Center's invaluable services to the survivors of sexual violence in the City of Alexandria.

INTRODUCED

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