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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 225

Offered February 2, 2015

Commending Bill Harrelson.

Patrons—Howell, Cole and Orrock

WHEREAS, Bill Harrelson of Fredericksburg, a retired airline pilot, successfully circumnavigated the globe, crossing both the North and South Poles in a light aircraft between December 28, 2014, and January 20, 2015; and

WHEREAS, pending verification from Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in Switzerland, Bill Harrelson will hold the record for the fastest circumnavigation of the world in a light aircraft, besting the previous record, which was set over a five-month period by a now-deceased aviator; and

WHEREAS, Bill Harrelson completed the series of multiple legs in his Lancair IV, which he had assembled from a kit with these flights in mind; the plane has nine fuel tanks, but no built-in oxygen system, no weather radar, no external deicing equipment, and no turbocharger, adding to the already challenging endeavor; and

WHEREAS, with minimal sponsorship, Bill Harrelson relied on the dedicated work of his wife, Sue, and other family, friends, volunteers, and fellow aviators to prepare for the journey; during the flights he communicated with his support team via text message on Skype; and

WHEREAS, Bill Harrelson began his precisely scheduled trip in Kinston, North Carolina, on December 28, 2014; he headed south to Montevideo, Uruguay, and on to Punta Arenas, Chile, before setting out towards Antarctica, where his first attempt at a circumnavigation had stalled in 2013 when he encountered severe weather; and

WHEREAS, conquering the snow and ice of the South Pole, Bill Harrelson returned to Chile to conduct repairs on his autopilot system, then continued on to Papeete, Tahiti, and Hamilton, New Zealand; and

WHEREAS, Bill Harrelson completed a long leg across the Pacific Ocean to Honolulu, Hawaii, then made land in San Luis Obispo, California; he continued up the coast to Fairbanks, Alaska, where he prepared for his final leg across the North Pole; and

WHEREAS, for the final leg of the journey, Bill Harrelson faced a 5,520-mile flight in 24-hour darkness from Fairbanks, over the North Pole, and south across Canada; flying by instruments and relying on his exceptional skill, he reached the North Pole, then returned to Kinston on January 20, 2015; and

WHEREAS, with his inspirational effort, Bill Harrelson has displayed the courage, perseverance, and indomitable spirit that are hallmarks of many great Virginians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Bill Harrelson hereby be commended on completing a daring circumnavigation of the world, crossing both the North and South Poles in his single engine light aircraft; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Bill Harrelson as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his record-breaking accomplishments.

INTRODUCED

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