

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1025

Commending the Virginia Society for Human Life.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2017
Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2017

WHEREAS, until the mid-1960s, Virginia and other states, with few exceptions, prohibited abortion unless the mother's life was in danger; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, an official at the Virginia Department of Health urged the legalization of abortion in a major speech on family planning, calling it a "logical and necessary extension of the thriving program of population control"; and

WHEREAS, at the time, Virginia's abortion law, which was enacted in 1847, permitted abortion only for the intention of saving the life of the mother; the purpose of the statute was determined by the Virginia Supreme Court in *Miller v. Bennett* in 1949 to be "for the protection of the unborn child and through it society"; and

WHEREAS, a committee was formed in 1967, which included the Honorable Joseph V. Gartlan, Jr., and Alex and Geline Williams, establishing the Virginia Society for Human Life to defend the Commonwealth's then current law from reversal; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Society for Human Life was organized on February 26, 1967, and was the first state right to life organization in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Virginia's abortion law was amended to include exceptions for rape, incest, the mother's physical and mental health, and fetal anomaly; and

WHEREAS, on January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States in the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalized what is tantamount to abortion-on-demand for the full nine months of pregnancy, invalidating prior laws on abortions in all states, including Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, the Virginia Society for Human Life joined other state organizations to form the National Right to Life Committee, the oldest and largest pro-life organization in the country; and

WHEREAS, since 1967, the Virginia Society for Human Life has worked successfully on the following pro-life laws on behalf of all Virginians: consent and parental notification for abortions, a ban on partial-birth abortions, a woman's right to know, prohibition of physician assisted suicide, healthcare decisions act, bans on human cloning and stem cell research, protection of infants (safe haven), feticide -unborn victims of violence, the "Choose Life" license plate, budget amendments to prevent abortion funding and limit abortion funding in the health care exchange, and abortion clinic regulations; and

WHEREAS, through its presidents, Alex Williams, Marilyn Fanning, Mary Anne Pierce, Allan Zagrodnik, Brenda D. Fastabend, Karen N. Toomy, Robert H. Follett, the Reverend Lester Messerschmidt, George J. Siedel, Catherine V. Driscoll, Constance Law, Eleanor M. Bell, Larry L. Stine, Louise D. Hartz, and Olivia Gans Turner, the Virginia Society for Human Life has represented the unborn and the vulnerable and worked to protect human life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia Society for Human Life on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Society for Human Life as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's unwavering commitment to the protection of innocent human life.

ENROLLED

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