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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 771

Offered January 17, 2017

Commending Gary A. Ambrose.

Patrons—Keam; Senators: Howell and Petersen

WHEREAS, Gary A. Ambrose of Vienna, chair of the board of directors of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, was honored by the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards with the prestigious 2016 Gartlan Award; and

WHEREAS, the Gartlan Award, named for the late Virginia State Senator Joseph V. Gartlan, Jr., recognizes one individual in the Commonwealth who has demonstrated distinguished leadership and advocacy for citizens with mental illness, intellectual disability, and/or substance-use disorders; and

WHEREAS, Gary Ambrose is an inspiring and effective citizen leader who fights for Virginians who depend on the public system of services and who often have no political voice; he has positively influenced improvements in the public system, especially through his advocacy for a more robust jail diversion program in Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, Gary Ambrose was first appointed to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) in 2013, after retiring from illustrious careers as a B52 pilot and brigadier general in the United States Air Force and as IBM's vice president for the Department of Defense; and

WHEREAS, Gary Ambrose and his wife, Marcia Ambrose, became active in the National Alliance for Mental Illness of Northern Virginia and Concerned Fairfax, an affiliated advocacy group, out of necessity because their son, Brad Ambrose, lived with paranoid schizophrenia for 17 years; and

WHEREAS, after Brad Ambrose's illness took him in 2014, Gary Ambrose continued to lead efforts to improve treatment and conditions for mentally ill persons and, in 2015, was elected Fairfax-Falls Church CSB board chairman; and

WHEREAS, from his position on the Fairfax County Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, Gary Ambrose championed the launch of Diversion First, an ambitious multiagency effort that seeks alternatives to incarceration for people facing low-level offenses who have mental illness, co-occurring substance-use disorders, or developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Diversion First has diverted hundreds of people who faced potential arrest to mental health treatment instead, which is just one of the tangible results Gary Ambrose has had a hand in producing in his Northern Virginia community; and

WHEREAS, Gary Ambrose received the 2016 Gartlan Award at the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards statewide conference, where he gave a deeply touching speech about his son, the struggles of living with someone with mental illness, and why he believes he can still make a difference; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Gary A. Ambrose of Vienna, chair of the board of directors of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, for receiving the prestigious 2016 Gartlan Award from the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Gary A. Ambrose as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his deeply personal commitment to advocating for better services on behalf of those who struggle with mental health illness, co-occurring substance-use disorders, and other developmental disabilities.

INTRODUCED

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