

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 925

Commending the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2017

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2017

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities, a group comprising 20 percent of the nation's population, make many valuable contributions to the Commonwealth and the United States; the Virginians with Disabilities Act enacted in 1985 was one of the earliest disability rights laws in the nation, preceding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by five years, and led to programs, services, and initiatives that promote the full integration of Virginians with disabilities into all aspects of society; and

WHEREAS, April 2017 marks the 35th anniversary of the founding of the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ECNV) in 1982, the second Center for Independent Living (CIL) established in the Commonwealth, which owes its start to the vision and initiative of a small group of Northern Virginians with disabilities who volunteered their time and efforts to create a disability resource center run by and for people with disabilities modeled after the first CIL in the United States, the Center for Independent Living founded in Berkeley, California, in 1972, and who were inspired and aided by a group of Virginians with disabilities who opened Endependence Center, Inc., (ECI) in Norfolk a year earlier; and

WHEREAS, for the past 35 years, ECNV has provided a unique combination of peer-based, self-help services, including peer counseling, independent living skills training, information on community resources and services, and individual advocacy to thousands of Northern Virginians with disabilities living and working in the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church, with more than 600 individuals served during fiscal year 2016 alone; and

WHEREAS, ECNV has provided countless hours of community education on disability issues, technical assistance on the ADA and other disability rights statutes, as well as accessibility standards to public and private entities in its service area; ECNV also provides systems advocacy aimed at eliminating physical, attitudinal, and policy barriers and promoting equal access and independent living options that assure community integration and full participation by individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, ECNV is recognized nationally for its advocacy and pivotal role in advancing the growth of the Independent Living and Disability Rights Movements, leading to the development of a network of more than 500 CILs nationwide and enactment of federal laws protecting the rights of people with disabilities, including the ADA; and

WHEREAS, ECNV, ECI, and Virginians with disabilities in communities across the Commonwealth, with the support and encouragement of state and local officials, have worked together to expand the network of Virginia CILs, which is ably coordinated by the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living, and now includes 17 CILs serving Virginians from Richmond to Roanoke and from Pennington Gap to Winchester; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's CILs demonstrate daily that peer-run, consumer-directed services are an effective and less costly means of empowering people with disabilities to take charge of their own lives and destinies and participate more fully in their communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia for its years of service to Virginians with disabilities and their families on the occasion of its 35th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its achievements at local, state, and federal levels in advancing and furthering the independent living and disability rights movements.

ENROLLED

HJ925ER