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## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 386

Offered February 8, 2017

*Commending Eddie Garretson.*

Patrons—Albo, Filler-Corn and Herring

WHEREAS, for 20 years, Eddie Garretson served and supported young people with disabilities in West Springfield as the head of Eddie's Club, a nonprofit organization that helped children and young adults participate in athletic and recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, Eddie Garretson observed a Challenger Division youth baseball game for children with physical and intellectual disabilities and decided to create a similar program in West Springfield; and

WHEREAS, with Eddie Garretson's help, the West Springfield Little League Challenger Division opened in 1993 with nine players; the division has since expanded to more than 250 players, earning recognition as the largest such division in the world; and

WHEREAS, in addition to supporting the West Springfield Little League Challenger Division, Eddie Garretson worked to create other recreational opportunities for children with special needs, forming Eddie's Club, which earned nonprofit status in 1997; and

WHEREAS, the highly trained volunteers of Eddie's Club hosted sensory-friendly movie nights, teen nights, Halloween and Valentine's Day dances, bowling nights, Easter brunches, and trips to the circus and George Mason University basketball games; and

WHEREAS, Eddie Garretson also coordinated more than 300 peer-buddy relationships to provide one-on-one mentorship and friendship to children with special needs; Eddie's Club helped all of its participants learn cooperative behaviors, problem-solving skills, and the importance of teamwork; and

WHEREAS, Eddie's Club succeeded thanks to the visionary leadership of Eddie Garretson, the hard work and dedication of its volunteer staff, and the generous support of the Woman's Club of Springfield, George Mason University, the Boy Scouts of America, local churches, and other community partners; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Eddie Garretson hereby be commended for his 20 years of work to create new opportunities for young athletes with disabilities through Eddie's Club; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Eddie Garretson as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his contributions to young people with disabilities in West Springfield.

INTRODUCED

HR386