

## 2018 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 225

Offered February 6, 2018

*Commending the Children's Advocacy Center of Highlands Community Services.*

Patrons—O'Quinn and Pillion; Senators: Carrico, Chafin and Stanley

WHEREAS, the Children's Advocacy Center of Highlands Community Services, a Washington County organization that provides vital support for child victims of sexual and physical abuse, marked its 20th anniversary in 2017; and

WHEREAS, chartered in 1997 through the efforts of a community task force, the Children's Advocacy Center of Highlands Community Services (CAC) is a nonprofit group that works closely with law enforcement, prosecutors, medical and mental health professionals, and social workers to serve the residents of Washington County and the City of Bristol; and

WHEREAS, as an advocate for child victims of abuse and trauma, the CAC conducts trauma assessments, offers court preparation services and education for children and their families, and provides a safe place for victims to be interviewed; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the CAC provides specialized treatment and counseling programs for children who have endured physical or sexual abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, designed to provide a nonthreatening environment for child victims, the CAC is located in a 150-year-old restored Victorian home and sits on 4.5 acres of open space that includes a gazebo and a playground; and

WHEREAS, since 2014, the CAC has had a dedicated facility dog named Nomad; bred and trained by the group Canine Companions for Independence, the Labrador-Golden Retriever mix is used to keep children at ease during interviews and treatment sessions and sometimes even accompanies them into court; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the CAC merged with Highlands Community Services, a nonprofit organization that specializes in mental health, substance abuse treatment, assistance for people with disabilities, and other services; and

WHEREAS, over its two decades in operation, the CAC has served as an invaluable resource for children and families while also helping to remove predators from the community; each year, the organization opens hundreds of cases of alleged abuse or neglect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Children's Advocacy Center of Highlands Community Services for 20 years of providing indispensable guidance and support to the residents of Washington County and the City of Bristol; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Children's Advocacy Center of Highlands Community Services as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its tireless efforts to safeguard the welfare of children.

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