

2018 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 593

Commending Kwame Alexander.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, May 30, 2018

WHEREAS, Kwame Alexander, a Newbery Medal-winning children's author and poet, will support his fellow authors as the head of Versify, a new publisher under Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in the spring of 2019; and

WHEREAS, a Chesapeake native who is a seventh-generation Virginian and the descendant of Afro-Union Patriot Heroes—African Americans who served the nation during the Civil War—Kwame Alexander is a renowned educator, poet, and bestselling author of more than 25 books; and

WHEREAS, as a young author, Kwame Alexander faced difficulties finding publishers for his work, and his acclaimed book, *The Crossover*, was rejected by 22 publishers before ultimately winning the Newbery Medal and the Coretta Scott King Honor award; as the head of Versify, he plans to seek unconventional authors whose unique stories may have been previously overlooked; and

WHEREAS, joining a small but influential group of children's authors who have launched their own imprints, Kwame Alexander will leverage his deep personal connections and ability to relate to a broad range of people to elevate newer writers; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Alexander has placed a special emphasis on books featuring poetry and bilingual works for Versify's inaugural lineup in spring 2019, which includes *White Rose* by Kip Wilson, *Vamos!/Let's Go!* by Raul Gonzalez, and *The Last Last-Day-of-Summer* by Lamar Giles; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Alexander is active as an ambassador for writing and literacy; he has traveled far and wide and has led delegations to Italy, Brazil, and Ghana; he also has visited many schools in the Commonwealth, where his poetry workshops inspire and motivate both students and teachers; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Alexander also founded Book-in-a-Day, a program that teaches and empowers teenagers to write, which has produced thousands of student authors from the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Kwame Alexander hereby be commended for launching his own imprint, Versify, in 2019; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Kwame Alexander as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his contributions to American literature and support for his fellow authors and poets.

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