

2020 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 74

Commending Advocates for Richmond Youth and the Youth Housing Stability Coalition of Greater Richmond.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2020

WHEREAS, Advocates for Richmond Youth and the Youth Housing Stability Coalition of Greater Richmond earned national accolades for their work to design and implement a community-wide response to homelessness among young people of color and LGBTQ+ youths; and

WHEREAS, based upon the national study conducted by Chapin Hall's Voices of Youth Count at the University of Chicago, one in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 and at least one in 30 adolescents ages 13 to 17 experience some form of homelessness unaccompanied by a parent or guardian over the course of a year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, 13 percent of people identified in Virginia as experiencing homelessness during the January 2019 Point-In-Time Count are youths or young adults (age 24 or under) or the minor child of a young adult; youths of color and LGBTQ+ youths are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, according to data from the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care, there were 773 youths ages 18 to 24 experiencing homelessness who were served between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019, of whom 79 percent were young people of color; national data shows that up to 40 percent of youths experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ+; and

WHEREAS, the causes and consequences of homelessness for youths ages 24 and under are varied and compound experiences of childhood trauma that have lasting effects on their well-being; building prevention efforts in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and education systems can mitigate these issues; and

WHEREAS, nationally one in four youths who age out of foster care without finding a permanent home experience homelessness within 18 months; and

WHEREAS, Advocates for Richmond Youth, a participatory action research team of young people who have been directly affected by homelessness and housing instability, was formed in July 2014; and

WHEREAS, with the support of Alex Wagaman at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, Advocates for Richmond Youth began conducting research and engaging in advocacy to increase visibility of the issue of youth homelessness; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg and other organizations, Advocates for Richmond Youth convened directly with impacted people and organizations to form the Youth Housing Stability Coalition; and

WHEREAS, this group completed the Coordinated, Comprehensive Plan to End Youth Housing Instability in Greater Richmond in 2018 with input from more than 25 directly impacted young people and nearly 75 representatives from organizations and state agencies who serve young people; and

WHEREAS, the momentum and effort of these groups has attracted the attention of other community organizations in Virginia, including the City of Petersburg and the Planning Council in Hampton Roads, which have seen increases in youth homelessness and understand the need for a tailored response that addresses the unique needs of adolescents and young adults; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of Advocates for Richmond Youth and the Youth Housing Stability Coalition of Greater Richmond have been recognized by A Way Home America, which named Richmond as one of only 10 cities in the United States that have the capacity and commitment to work with national experts to end youth homelessness by centering the needs of young people of color and LGBTQ+ youths through the Grand Challenge Initiative; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Advocates for Richmond Youth and the Youth Housing Stability Coalition of Greater Richmond hereby be commended for developing a youth-affirming, coordinated community response to prevent and end youth homelessness; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to Advocates for Richmond Youth and the Youth Housing Stability Coalition of Greater Richmond as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for their important contributions to the Richmond community.

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