

2022 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 442

Offered March 7, 2022

Commending Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources.

Patrons—Keam; Senator: Petersen

WHEREAS, Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources, a nonprofit dedicated to rebuilding lives and fostering safer communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia through various restorative justice initiatives, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2021; and

WHEREAS, the origins of Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources (OAR) date to 1968, when a prison strike at the Virginia State Penitentiary in Richmond inspired local faith leaders to convene a conference on churches and the correctional system; and

WHEREAS, the OAR movement was subsequently founded by Jay Worrall, Jr., who envisioned people coming together to care for and support their fellow community members who were incarcerated and in the process of reforming and improving themselves; and

WHEREAS, officially incorporated as Offender Aid and Restoration in 1970, OAR opened its first office in 1971 and began developing services for the benefit of individuals and families navigating the criminal justice systems of Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince Williams Counties; and

WHEREAS, at its height, the national OAR movement grew to 22 affiliates across 10 states, playing an instrumental role in the broader restorative justice movement and its accomplishments during this time; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, OAR began providing alternative sentencing programs to allow certain justice-involved community members to avoid convictions or incarceration by performing community service or attending educational classes; around this time, the organization began to hire staff to complement the efforts of its devoted volunteers; and

WHEREAS, OAR changed its name to Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources in 1998 to better reflect the scope of the organization's mission and goals and began a partnership with George Mason University in the late 1990s to enhance its program assessments; and

WHEREAS, OAR continued to develop and expand its evidenced-based programs and services throughout the 2000s, including the Virginia Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Program, and today continues to maintain six OAR affiliates throughout the country, including four in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, through the visionary leadership of its founder and the unwavering dedication of its volunteers and staff, OAR has helped more than 150,000 justice-involved community members have access to equitable opportunities for success, making a positive impact on countless lives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's history and its many contributions to the Commonwealth.

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