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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 17

Offered February 3, 2022

Celebrating the life of Jameel Jalal Abed.

Patrons—Hashmi and McClellan

WHEREAS, Jameel Jalal Abed, owner of the Mediterranean Bakery & Deli on Quioccasin Road in Henrico County and a founding member of the Islamic Center of Virginia in Chesterfield County, died on August 10, 2021; and

WHEREAS, born on August 16, 1950, in Palestine, Jameel Abed came to Richmond with his father in the late 1960s to help him with his importing and exporting business; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed met his wife, Saba, when he was visiting Palestine in the 1970s, and the couple were married soon after, at which point Saba joined Jameel in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Jameel and Saba Abed opened Royal Bakery in the mid-1980s, producing pita bread and other baked goods for sale at Ukrop's Super Markets locations in the Greater Richmond area; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed sold Royal Bakery to purchase the Mediterranean Bakery & Deli and subsequently transformed the restaurant into a community space for individuals from all walks of life to gather and take refuge; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed was known for his generosity and supported many refugees new to the Richmond area by helping them navigate American culture, secure employment, shop in grocery stores, and obtain driver's licenses; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed faced racism and prejudice as an Arab American in the Commonwealth and was inspired by these experiences to become politically active and find ways to fight discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed's work to promote equality included collaborating with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, founding the Commonwealth's first Arab political action committee, and participating in anti-discrimination rallies in Richmond and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed was a man led by his Muslim faith, who stood tall on his convictions and lived with an open heart toward all humans; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed's faith also manifested itself in part through his efforts to raise funds to build the Islamic Center of Virginia, a masjid serving Muslims in the Greater Richmond area; and

WHEREAS, as a community leader and business owner, Jameel Abed consistently strived to make Richmond a more welcoming and compassionate city for all; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed was a longtime supporter of the Armenian community in the Greater Richmond area whose contributions to the annual Armenian Food Festival hosted by St. James Armenian Church in Richmond were instrumental to the event's success; and

WHEREAS, Jameel Abed will be fondly remembered and deeply missed by his wife of 51 years, Saba; his three sons, Niddal, Osama, and Bassam; his four grandchildren; two brothers; two sisters; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Jameel Jalal Abed; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Jameel Jalal Abed as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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