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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 729

Offered February 16, 2023

Commending the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department.

Patrons—Filler-Corn, Bulova and Watts; Senator: Marsden

WHEREAS, for 75 years, the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department has safeguarded the lives and property of the residents of the Burke community in Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department traces its roots to 1947, when a group of local residents recognized the need for a more conveniently located fire station; at the time, the nearest departments were located in Annandale and what was then the Town of Fairfax; and

WHEREAS, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated on January 29, 1948, with a service area of 91 square miles, representing about 9,000 residents; the community raised money to build a fire station that spring, and the building remained in use by the community for the next 50 years, including as the Burke Post Office; and

WHEREAS, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department's first apparatus was a 1932 Ford fire truck purchased by the Burke Communities Civic Association from the Annandale Volunteer Fire Department that became affectionately known as "Old Red"; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department had 47 active volunteers and responded to 26 calls for service; and

WHEREAS, as Fairfax County grew and more fire departments were established, the county implemented a numbering system to enhance coordination, and the Burke Volunteer Fire Department became known as Company 14; and

WHEREAS, in the 1950s, the county also began assigning paid, professional firefighters to volunteer stations; by the time of its 15th anniversary in 1963, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department had 56 total staff members, 47 of whom were operational firefighters, including three professional members; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department also constructed a new fire station, much of which was built by members of the department who worked in construction or other relevant professions; and

WHEREAS, in the aftermath of Hurricane Camille in 1969, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department responded to extensive flooding in low-lying areas of Burke and assisted with numerous evacuations and water rescues; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department responded to more than 1,000 calls for emergency service, including structure fires, brush fires, vehicle crashes, water rescues, and medical emergencies; and

WHEREAS, calls for service increased steadily as the community expanded, reaching more than 2,000 calls per year in the late 1980s; by 1989, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department had become the largest volunteer fire department in Fairfax County with seven vehicles, 70 volunteers, and 30 career staff serving an 11-square-mile area with a population of 47,000 people; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department received approval to purchase an innovative hybrid vehicle known as a "Quint" that incorporated the functions of a pumper truck and an aerial ladder in one platform; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the way its mission had evolved over the years, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department changed its name to the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department in 1992; the department continued to grow with the community and hired its first female firefighters in the mid-1990s; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department experienced a disaster when an electrical short in a truck started a fire in the station, which sustained significant damage despite assistance from surrounding departments; the station was razed and rebuilt, and the department began operating from a brand new, highly advanced facility on December 4, 2001; and

WHEREAS, by 2014, the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department had grown to 100 active members, who recorded 31,003 hours answering 3,432 calls for service, the majority of which were for emergency medical service; and

WHEREAS, the courageous, highly trained members of the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department have served residents with dedication and distinction and helped make the Burke community a great place to live, work, and raise a family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department on the occasion of its 75th anniversary; and, be it

INTRODUCED

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59 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution
60 for presentation to the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department as an expression of the General
61 Assembly's admiration for its service and contributions to the residents of Fairfax County.