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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 741

Offered February 17, 2023

Commending Michael Pettaway Tomlin.

Patrons—Mullin, Avoli, Bagby, Batten, Bourne, Carr, Clark, Guzman, Hope, Jenkins, Kory, Lopez, Maldonado, Murphy, Rasoul, Reid, Scott, D.L., Seibold, Sewell, Simonds, Ward, Ware, Watts and Willett; Senators: Mason, Barker, Boysko, Deeds, Favola, Howell, McDougle, Norment, Reeves, Rouse, Spruill and Vogel

WHEREAS, during his 16-year tenure as head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers in the National Football League, Hampton native Michael Pettaway Tomlin has never finished the regular season with a losing record and currently maintains the longest streak for consecutive non-losing seasons at the start of a coaching career; and

WHEREAS, Michael "Mike" Pettaway Tomlin grew up in Hampton and graduated from Denbigh High School in Newport News and The College of William & Mary, where he played as a wide receiver on the Tribe football team; he began his coaching career as a wide receivers coach at Virginia Military Institute in 1995; and

WHEREAS, Mike Tomlin gained experience as a position coach at the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee at Martin, Arkansas State University, and the University of Cincinnati before joining the National Football League (NFL) in 2001; and

WHEREAS, Mike Tomlin served as the defensive backs coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers from 2001 to 2005, during which time the team led the league in overall defense twice and won Super Bowl XXXVII, where the Buccaneers set a new Super Bowl record with five interceptions, three of which were returned for touchdowns; and

WHEREAS, Mike Tomlin spent the 2006 season as the defensive coordinator of the Minnesota Vikings, then became the 16th head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers in January 2007; and

WHEREAS, in his first season as head coach of the Steelers, Mike Tomlin led the team to a 10-6 record, first place in the American Football Conference Northern Division (AFC North), and an appearance in the playoffs; and

WHEREAS, one year later, Mike Tomlin oversaw a 12-4 campaign in which the Steelers held the AFC North crown, won the AFC Championship, and defeated the Arizona Cardinals 27-23 in Super Bowl XLIII, a thrilling game that entered Steeler lore for its defensive heroics, when outside linebacker James Harrison intercepted a pass on the goal line and returned it 100 yards for a touchdown, then the longest play in Super Bowl history; and

WHEREAS, Mike Tomlin was the first head coach in Steelers franchise history to win divisional titles in his first two seasons, and at 36 years old, he was the youngest head coach to win a Super Bowl at the time; and

WHEREAS, now one of the longest-tenured coaches with a single team in the NFL, Mike Tomlin has led the Steelers to 10 playoff runs, seven divisional titles, three AFC Championship Games, and two Super Bowl appearances counting the victory in Super Bowl XLIII; and

WHEREAS, after the conclusion of the 2022 NFL season, Mike Tomlin's regular season record stood at 163-93-2, the third most wins for an active head coach in the league; and

WHEREAS, when he was hired, Mike Tomlin was the 10th Black head coach in NFL history and only the first in Steelers franchise history; as one of the few minority head coaches in the league, he is influential to the ongoing development of the NFL's Rooney Rule, which requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for a vacant head coaching position and was adjusted in 2022 to enhance opportunities for people of color and women for nearly all league and team jobs; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Mike Tomlin has inspired colleagues, players, and fans through his passion for the game and uniquely quotable catchphrases and commentary, better known to Steeler Nation as "Tomlinisms"; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades, Mike Tomlin was selected as the Motorola NFL Coach of the Year in 2008 and was inducted into the William & Mary Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Michael Pettaway Tomlin for his record-setting achievements as head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers in the National Football League; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Michael Pettaway Tomlin as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his accomplishments.