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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 381

Offered February 20, 2023

Commending Hamidullah Noori.

Patrons—McClellan and Hashmi

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori is an accomplished chef, community leader, and advocate for refugees in the Greater Richmond community; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori was born and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan, before immigrating to the Commonwealth in 2015 with his family due to his culinary work with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori has served in the culinary industry for many years; he began his culinary career at age 18, then joined the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul in 2003; in 2004, he joined the Kabul Serena Hotel, a five-star hotel in Afghanistan, and would later return as executive chef, overseeing the cuisine of several restaurants in the hotel; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori was featured in several cooking show episodes on TOLO TV in Afghanistan and was later given the executive chef position at USAID; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori continued to dedicate himself to the culinary world with the dream of opening his own restaurant after arriving in the Commonwealth, moving to Richmond in 2016, and working at Ellwood Thompson and then as a featured chef at the Underground Kitchen; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori opened his first restaurant, The Mantu, which means "me and you," in Richmond's Carytown in May 2019, featuring the chef's modern take on classic Afghan cuisine; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori was invited and competed on The Food Network's *Beat Bobby Flay* in May 2019, and he has since been featured in numerous publications such as *The New York Times*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Richmond Magazine*, and *Plate Magazine*, among others, not only highlighting his culinary achievements but also recognizing his commitment to building a community for those who need it most; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori has worked with the International Rescue Committee, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, and other organizations welcoming refugees arriving in the Commonwealth after the fall of the Afghan government in 2021; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to help provide authentic Afghan food for new refugees, on a single day in the fall of 2021, Hamidullah Noori cooked nearly 3,000 meals for refugees at a local military base; he has since set a goal of feeding every Afghan family resettling in Richmond their first meal in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori opened his second location, The Mantu Market, in Henrico County with his nephew, where they serve authentic Afghan bread and fresh kebabs, sell groceries and Afghan-style housewares, and employ other Afghan refugees, fulfilling their mission to serve humanity through their food; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori is employing refugees who have recently moved to Richmond from war-torn countries such as Afghanistan and Ukraine at his restaurant and market in an effort to help these individuals and their families realize the same American dream he has come to live every day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Hamidullah Noori for his exceptional culinary skills, community commitment, and advocacy for refugees; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Hamidullah Noori as a testament to the General Assembly's appreciation for his outstanding achievements and his dedication to a supportive and stronger community.

INTRODUCED

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