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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 975

Offered February 19, 2007

Commending the Gesher Jewish Day School on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

Patron—Hull, Bulova, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Englin and Shannon

WHEREAS, the Gesher Jewish Day School, Northern Virginia's Jewish Community Day School, is a private, co-educational day school for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade and offers a rigorous dual curriculum of Judaic and general studies; and

WHEREAS, the Gesher Jewish Day School was founded in 1982 by a group of pioneering parents and visionaries, including Rabbi Sheldon and Shulamith Elster, Rabbi Arnold Fink, and Susan Koss, a creative and enthusiastic teacher; and

WHEREAS, "Gesher" means "bridge" in Hebrew and the vision of the Gesher Jewish Day School is to "Build a Bridge of Knowledge, Character, and Wisdom to the Future" and help Jewish children and Jewish families connect to one another through an outstanding Jewish education; and

WHEREAS, the first kindergarten class at the Gesher Jewish Day School began in 1982 in a local synagogue, the Augudas Achim Congregation, in Alexandria; and an additional grade was added each year until 1988, with the first sixth grade class graduating with pride in 1989; and

WHEREAS, the Gesher Jewish Day School relocated in 1994 to larger quarters in the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in Fairfax and, to provide more classroom space, established the Chabad Community Campus in 1998 as a nearby satellite campus with a computer and library facility for the first and second grades; and

WHEREAS, with help from a dedicated community supporter and a grant from the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, the Gesher Jewish Day School added a middle school with a seventh grade in 1999 and an eighth grade the following year; and

WHEREAS, priding itself on being a place where every child can shine and emphasizing a warm, nurturing atmosphere, the Gesher Jewish Day School proudly serves Jewish families from many congregations with diverse approaches to Jewish life throughout Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Gesher Jewish Day School is accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Schools and is proud of the individualized attention and special programs it offers its students, characterized by small class sizes, typically limited to 16 students, with an average student-to-teacher ratio of 9:1; and

WHEREAS, the Gesher Jewish Day School is governed by a board of directors composed of parents and community members with a strong Parent-Teacher Organization that helps to maintain a flexible, supportive, and student-centered learning environment; and

WHEREAS, in order to continue to develop and grow and meet its dynamic academic mission, in 2002 the Gesher Jewish Day School purchased a beautiful 28-acre property located six miles west of its main campus with plans to move into a brand new facility there in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the new Gesher Jewish Day School campus will be situated on a large partially wooded suburban campus with playgrounds, fields, and other athletic facilities and a building that seeks to connect to the land of Israel with a front facade that copies the color and feel of the architecture of Jerusalem; and

WHEREAS, the cornerstone of the building design is the 180-seat Beit Midrash, a round, light-filled space for T'fillot and Judaic learning and the facility will include state-of-the-art classrooms, a technology center, a complete library, common areas for special studies, office space, a stage, a gymnasium, and a science center; and

WHEREAS, the middle school will be located in a separate wing of the new facility with dedicated space for the unique needs of middle school-aged students, including science labs, special study space, and separate computer facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate the Gesher Jewish Day School on the occasion of its 25th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the board of directors of the Gesher Jewish Day School at its March 11, 2007, "Guardian of the Bridge Gala" as an expression of the General Assembly's best wishes for the school's continued success.

INTRODUCED

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