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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 362

Offered February 3, 2017

Commending the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind goalball team.

Patrons—Hanger; Delegate: Bell, Richard P.

WHEREAS, the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind goalball team from Staunton had an amazing 2016 season that culminated in winning the United States Association of Blind Athletes High School National Championship; and

WHEREAS, goalball is a sport developed in 1946 to help rehabilitate visually impaired World War II soldiers, and it requires athletes to use a sense of hearing instead of sight; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind (VSDB) goalball team finished the 2016 regular season with a record of 10-0, including five wins in the Eastern Athletic Association for the Blind (EAAB) Tournament; and

WHEREAS, in March 2016, VSDB defeated Florida School for the Blind by a score of 7-3 to secure the EAAB title, which was the school's first goalball championship since the program began in 2002; and

WHEREAS, the members of the VSDB team winning the EAAB championship were Zion Walker, Tyrone Brotherton, Sean Walker, Hunter Johnson, Malik Sims, and Daniyal Salman; and

WHEREAS, in early September 2016, four members of the VSDB goalball team decided they wanted to participate in the United States Association of Blind Athletes High School National Championship tournament in St. Augustine, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Zion Walker, Christian King, Tyrone Brotherton, and Sean Walker had only five weeks to practice and prepare for the tournament, where they would face teams that were just finishing their goalball seasons; the VSDB season lasts from January to March; and

WHEREAS, VSDB lost in the national tournament's first round to the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, but the team regrouped and won five straight games, including defeating the same Texas team in the championship final; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the tournament, the VSDB team was recognized with the Team Sportsmanship Award, Tyrone Brotherton and Sean Walker were named to the All-American team, and Sean Walker was honored as the tournament's Most Valuable Player; and

WHEREAS, 2016 brought VSDB's first-ever National High School Goalball Championship and the first national title of any kind for the school's visually impaired sports program; and

WHEREAS, throughout their undefeated 2016 regular season and national championship run, the VSDB goalball team received terrific mentoring and coaching from Rory Swientek, Jim Kiser, and Kristy McClain; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 national championship was a special experience and proud accomplishment that the VSDB community and all members of the goalball team will never forget; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind goalball team on its 2016 season and winning the United States National High School Goalball Championship; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Rory Swientek, head coach of the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind goalball team, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the team's determination and outstanding championship-winning 2016 season.

INTRODUCED

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