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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 186

Offered March 2, 2022

Commending the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program.

Patrons—Ebbin; Delegates: Bennett-Parker and Plum

WHEREAS, on March 22, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 to include a national nutrition program for individuals 60 years and older; and

WHEREAS, for five decades, this landmark law has helped to fund community-based organizations like Meals on Wheels, and it is still the only federal program designed specifically to meet the nutritional and social needs of older adults; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, Meals on Wheels programs across the country are joining together for the March for Meals awareness campaign to celebrate 50 years of success and garner the support needed to ensure these critical programs can continue to address food insecurity and malnutrition, combat social isolation, enable independence, and improve health for years to come; and

WHEREAS, volunteers for Meals on Wheels programs are the backbone of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program, and they not only deliver nutritious meals to seniors and individuals with disabilities who are at significant risk of hunger and isolation, but also provide caring, companionship, and attention to their welfare; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels programs throughout the Commonwealth provide nutritious meals to seniors that help them maintain their health and independence, thereby helping to prevent unnecessary falls, hospitalizations, or premature institutionalization; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels programs in Virginia have made heroic contributions to communities by providing essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic placed unprecedented barriers on the independence of individuals over 60, and organizations like Senior Services Alexandria (SSA) expanded their nutrition services programs to more than double the number of clients served previously; and

WHEREAS, SSA's meal delivery programs expanded from delivering roughly 900 meals weekly in March 2020, to delivering approximately 2,500 meals weekly by June; the organization's no-fee grocery shopping service also became a lifeline for at-risk older adults, serving more than 135 seniors; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Meals on Wheels Alexandria extended their services beyond nutritional support to help schedule over 600 COVID-19 vaccine appointments for older, high-risk individuals; and

WHEREAS, the senior population across the country is increasing substantially, and action is needed to support local Meals on Wheels programs through volunteering, donations, and efforts to raise awareness of these vital services to ensure that they can continue to be delivered for another 50 years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its creation; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of Meals on Wheels programs in Virginia as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the way the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program has enriched communities by addressing food insecurity and isolation among seniors.

INTRODUCED

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