

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 601

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable Aston Donald McEachin.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 6, 2023

Agreed to by the Senate, February 9, 2023

WHEREAS, the Honorable Aston Donald McEachin, a former member of the Virginia House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia who represented the residents of Central Virginia in the United States House of Representatives for three terms, and a trailblazing leader who inspired others through his determination and passion for public service, died on November 28, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the child of a military family, Donald McEachin was born in Nuremberg, Germany, and briefly lived in Italy before settling in the Richmond area; he graduated from St. Christopher's School, where he was a member of the basketball team, and subsequently earned a bachelor's degree from American University and a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Donald McEachin cofounded the law firm McEachin and Gee, now known as the Gee Law Firm, and enjoyed a long and fulfilling career as a personal injury attorney; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the community, Donald McEachin ran for and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1995 and ably represented the residents of the 74th District until 2002; though ultimately unsuccessful, he made history in 2001 as the first Black American to run as a major party's nominee for attorney general in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Donald McEachin returned to the Virginia House of Delegates for one additional term representing the 74th District again from 2006 to 2008, then continued his service to the Commonwealth as a member of the Senate of Virginia representing the 9th District from 2008 through the end of 2016, when he became the third-ever Black American from Virginia elected to the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, as the representative for the 4th Congressional District from 2017 until the time of his passing, Donald McEachin served the residents of 15 cities and counties in Central Virginia, including all of Richmond, parts of Henrico County and Chesterfield County, and the Tri-Cities; and

WHEREAS, Donald McEachin introduced and supported many important pieces of legislation to enhance the lives of Virginians and people around the country; he was a champion for human rights, affordable health care, environmental justice, reproductive rights, and economic equality; and

WHEREAS, among his many achievements, Donald McEachin helped preserve and restore Black cemeteries through the African American Burial Grounds Preservation Act; due to his successful efforts,

Fort Lee will be renamed as Fort Gregg-Adams after Lieutenant General Arthur J. Gregg and Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams Earley, two prominent Black members of the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure in the House of Representatives, Donald McEachin offered his leadership and expertise to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on Natural Resources, the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, and the Armed Services Committee; and

WHEREAS, Donald McEachin earned the admiration of his colleagues as a humble, principled, and deeply dedicated legislator; he strove to build bipartisan consensus and respect and served the Commonwealth and the nation with the utmost dignity, integrity, and distinction; and

WHEREAS, Donald McEachin volunteered his leadership to many other civic and service organizations; he was a life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Donald McEachin underwent treatment for colorectal cancer and struggled courageously with secondary effects from the disease until his passing; he encouraged others to be vigilant about cancer detection and learn more about early diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS, Donald McEachin lived his devout faith through his compassionate actions; he held a master's degree in divinity from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Beaverdam; and

WHEREAS, Donald McEachin will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Colette; his children, Mac, Briana, and Alexandra, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Aston Donald McEachin, a consummate public servant who touched countless lives in the Richmond region and throughout the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable Aston Donald McEachin as an expression of the General

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Assembly's respect for his memory.