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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 718

Offered February 16, 2023

*Commending Claire Guthrie Gastañaga.*

Patrons—Carr and Hope; Senator: Hanger

WHEREAS, Claire Guthrie Gastañaga, an esteemed advocate for civil rights and liberties and the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia, retired in 2021 after nearly nine years in the role and decades of service to the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Claire Gastañaga came to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Virginia with a tenacious firebrand personality that is well-known at the General Assembly and a relentless energy for pursuing a fairer, more just, and more equitable Commonwealth that she has brought to every role, conversation, or debate; and

WHEREAS, under Claire Gastañaga's leadership, the ACLU of Virginia expanded from a staff of six to a staff of more than 20 while its membership tripled, growing from 8,500 to more than 28,000 members; and

WHEREAS, the ACLU of Virginia's accomplishments during Claire Gastañaga's tenure included successful litigation for LGBTQIA rights, passage of laws protecting individuals' privacy, and the publication of various reports examining the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, over her illustrious career, Claire Gastañaga has been a tireless and visionary advocate, consistently urging organizations and people in power to fight for bold policy changes and to use their platforms to better their communities; and

WHEREAS, Claire Gastañaga's influence can be seen in many meaningful social movements over her decades of service, from the pursuit of marriage equality to the fight for a fundamental right to vote for all Virginians, and she has been honored by many organizations for her dedication to LGBTQIA rights and for her commitment to racial justice; and

WHEREAS, Claire Gastañaga has added immeasurable value and an untold number of accomplishments to the organizations she has supported, including Equality Virginia, the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations, and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance; and

WHEREAS, throughout her professional life, Claire Gastañaga has been a trailblazer and an inspiration to women across the Commonwealth, holding roles previously only occupied by men and always using her position to bring greater awareness and dignity to the disparities that cut our communities across lines of race and gender; and

WHEREAS, Claire Gastañaga previously served as the chief of staff and special counsel to the Speaker of the House of Delegates and was the first female Chief Deputy Attorney General of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, generations of state officials have benefited from Claire Gastañaga's incomparable assistance and wise counsel, and her forceful advocacy has had a profound and positive impact on many lives throughout the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Claire Guthrie Gastañaga, a true embodiment of what it means to commit one's life to serving the community and being an agent of change, on the occasion of her retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Claire Guthrie Gastañaga as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and gratitude for her contributions to the Commonwealth and best wishes for a long and fulfilling retirement.

INTRODUCED

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