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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 151

Offered February 20, 2023

Commending Virginia Voice, Inc.

Patrons—McClellan, Barker, Boysko, Deeds, Ebbin, Favola, Hanger, Hashmi, Howell, Lewis, Marsden, Morrissey, Reeves and Vogel

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice, Inc., an organization that advances its mission by connecting individuals with blindness, vision impairment, and other print disabilities to news, information, community, culture, and the arts using technology and the human voice, celebrates its 45th anniversary in 2023; and

WHEREAS, incorporated in 1978 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Virginia Voice operates to serve the needs of individuals who reside in Central Virginia, Hampton Roads, and other parts of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice is a radio-reading, audio information service that makes print material accessible for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or severely handicapped; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice serves 11,500 subscribers with its audio broadcast; this broadcast is made available on radios that are pretuned to a specific frequency that receives the Virginia Voice 24/7 broadcast; radios or smart speakers are loaned to listeners who sign up as official subscribers to Virginia Voice, and all services are free of charge to subscribers; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice builds its broadcast from 200 publications that are read aloud by volunteers, including local, regional, and national newspapers and magazines and other publications that provide perspectives and information on topics such as health, history, education, current events, the environment, arts, culture, gardening, and more, in addition to inspirational commentary; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice recruits, trains, and manages more than 120 dedicated and talented volunteers whose voices help to create the Virginia Voice broadcast of scheduled programs and podcasts, which often feature local subject matter experts; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice creates equitable access to live theater, museum exhibitions, movies, and other art forms, as well as sporting events, through live audio description programming that describes the critical visual elements for individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or otherwise disabled; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice, through community engagement and fundraising activities, promotes awareness of and advocates for the need to support individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or otherwise disabled; the organization seeks support in the form of tangible services and monetary assistance from every level of government, corporations, service organizations, and foundations, as well as through donations from individuals throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice partners with organizations in the community to promote awareness, raise vital funds, increase listenership, and recruit volunteers to assist in the delivery of services to Virginians with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice promotes goodwill and the ideal that serving others and bettering communities is an attainable goal that improves quality of life and helps to make the Commonwealth a place where individuals seek to live, work, and raise their families; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Voice supports the choice of blind, vision impaired, and print disabled Virginians to live and thrive independently and their desire to have equitable access to all their community has to offer; and

WHEREAS, the success of Virginia Voice is a result of the hard work and dedication of the organization's staff, volunteers, and board members, and the unwavering support of the listeners and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Virginia Voice, Inc., hereby be commended for its 45 years of service to its listeners and the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Virginia Voice, Inc., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's appreciation for the organization's history and its contributions to the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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