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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 94

Offered January 13, 2022

Commending Shawn Weneta.

Patron—Kory

WHEREAS, Shawn Weneta, an esteemed advocate for restorative justice, received the Citizens Advocacy Award at the 15th annual Citizens Against Recidivism, Inc., awards ceremony on October 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Citizens Against Recidivism, Inc., presents its Citizens Advocacy Award each year to honor formerly incarcerated individuals whose efforts to uplift and empower others have made a difference in their community; and

WHEREAS, Shawn Weneta was pardoned by Governor Ralph Northam on April 23, 2020, in recognition of his years of advocacy on behalf of individuals in prison; and

WHEREAS, Shawn Weneta currently serves as the legislative liaison for The Humanization Project, an organization dedicated to changing perceptions of individuals behind bars through creative writing projects, educational outreach, and other endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Shawn Weneta grew up a member of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and credits his faith for inspiring him to look beyond his prison sentence and to recommit his life to serving others; and

WHEREAS, while in prison, Shawn Weneta founded Mending Fences, a six-month rehabilitation program aimed at helping prisoners find peace and reconciliation by encouraging them to make amends with the victims they have harmed; and

WHEREAS, in collaboration with the American Red Cross, Virginians for Judicial Reform, and fellow inmates, Shawn Weneta established a first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation certificate program at his correctional institution; the individuals who became Red Cross instructors through this program have subsequently provided valuable, lifesaving training to both the institution's general population and individuals preparing for reentry into society; and

WHEREAS, by compelling others to show compassion and understanding toward those who are incarcerated and by encouraging the support of restorative justice programs and judicial reform organizations throughout the Commonwealth, Shawn Weneta has affected countless lives and inspired many to join him in his cause; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Shawn Weneta, a noteworthy restorative justice advocate, for receiving the Citizens Advocacy Award from Citizens Against Recidivism, Inc.; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Shawn Weneta as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his contributions to the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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