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SENATE BILL NO. 491

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 11, 2022

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 24 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 31, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2499.9 through 2.2-2499.13, relating to establishment of the Virginia African Diaspora Advisory Board.*

Patron—McClellan

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 24 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 31, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2499.9 through 2.2-2499.13, as follows:

Article 31.

Virginia African Diaspora Advisory Board.

§ 2.2-2499.9. Virginia African Diaspora Advisory Board; purpose.

The Virginia African Diaspora Advisory Board (the Board) is established as an advisory board in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Governor on ways to improve economic and cultural links between the Commonwealth and African nations, with a focus on the areas of commerce and trade, agriculture, art, education, and government.

§ 2.2-2499.10. Membership; terms; quorum; meetings.

The Board shall have a total membership of 21 members that shall consist of 18 nonlegislative citizen members and three ex officio members. Nonlegislative citizen members, at least 15 of whom shall be persons who identify as part of the African diaspora, shall be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The Secretaries of Agriculture and Forestry, Commerce and Trade, and Education or their designees shall serve ex officio with nonvoting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Board shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.

Ex officio members of the Board shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All members may be reappointed.

After the initial staggering of terms, nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of four years. No nonlegislative citizen member shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment.

The Board shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Board shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.

§ 2.2-2499.11. Compensation; expenses.

Members of the Board shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825.

§ 2.2-2499.12. Powers and duties of the Board.

The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Undertake studies, sponsor symposiums, conduct research, and gather information and data in order to accomplish its purpose as set forth in § 2.2-2499.9 and to formulate and present its recommendations to the Governor relating to issues of concern and importance to the African diaspora community in the Commonwealth;

2. Apply for, accept, and expend gifts, grants, or donations from public, quasi-public, or private sources, including any matching funds as may be designated in the appropriation act, to enable it to better carry out its objectives;

3. Advise the Governor regarding the development of economic, agricultural, cultural, educational, and governmental links between the Commonwealth, African nations, and the African diaspora community in Virginia;

4. Advise the Governor as needed regarding any statutory, regulatory, or other issues of importance to the African diaspora community in the Commonwealth;

5. Report annually its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports. The Board may make interim reports to

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59 *the Governor as it deems advisable; and*

60 *6. Report annually on its fiscal activities, including any matching funds received or expended by the*
61 *Board.*

62 **§ 2.2-2499.13. Staffing.**

63 *The Office of the Governor shall provide staff support to the Board. All agencies of the*
64 *Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Board, upon request.*

65 **2. That the initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members to the Virginia African Diaspora**
66 **Advisory Board shall be staggered as follows: four members for a term of one year; four members**
67 **for a term of two years; five members for a term of three years; and five members for a term of**
68 **four years.**