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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 166

Offered February 28, 2022

Commending the Henrico Citizen.

Patrons—McClellan; Delegates: Bagby, McQuinn, VanValkenburg and Willett

WHEREAS, the *Henrico Citizen*, a cherished hometown news source for residents of Henrico County, celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2021; and

WHEREAS, since its founding in 2001, the *Henrico Citizen* has been owned and operated by publisher Tom Lappas, who embarked upon his career as a newspaper owner shortly after graduating with a degree in journalism from the University of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural print edition of the *Henrico Citizen* ran on September 20, 2001, carrying the headline "New North Park Library Dedicated," an indication of the local coverage that would serve as the outlet's prime focus; and

WHEREAS, the *Henrico Citizen* features stories that highlight the people, places, and events that define Henrico County, while also covering the various local issues that are pertinent to its residents; and

WHEREAS, the *Henrico Citizen* is a member of the Virginia Press Association, and its staff have earned more than 230 awards over the past 20 years for excellence in journalism and advertising; and

WHEREAS, the accomplishments of the *Henrico Citizen* have been made possible through the newspaper's sterling leadership, including longtime managing editor Patty Kruszewski and online and events editor Sarah Story, as well as the tireless efforts of more than 100 writers, salespeople, contributors, and interns who have served the paper over the years; and

WHEREAS, despite ending its print edition in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the *Henrico Citizen* continues to reach its audience through various digital platforms, including its website, email newsletter, regular podcasts, and social media; and

WHEREAS, the *Henrico Citizen* has seen its readership increase to more than 70,000 unique readers per month since shifting completely online, and its writers have responded by producing more than 2,300 articles, briefs, event notices, and other types of coverage over the past year; and

WHEREAS, the *Henrico Citizen* was one of three Virginia news organizations to receive funding through the Facebook Journalism Project's COVID-19 Local News Relief Fund Grant Program in 2020 and was one of only two newsrooms in the Commonwealth to be selected to host a Report for America corps member in 2021; and

WHEREAS, reflecting the importance of an educated citizenry to the health of American democracy, the *Henrico Citizen* may be regarded as playing an indispensable role in society's pursuit of liberty and justice for all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the *Henrico Citizen* on the occasion of its 20th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Tom Lappas, publisher of the *Henrico Citizen*, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the newspaper's contributions to the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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