

# 2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

24200376D

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 822

Offered July 18, 2024

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*Commending Levar Marcus Stoney.*

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Patron—

10 WHEREAS, Levar Marcus Stoney, a dedicated public servant who has demonstrated his commitment to  
11 social equity and community development at both the local and state levels, has ably served as the mayor of  
12 Richmond for two terms from 2017 through 2024; and

13 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney grew up in Hampton Roads and was a first generation high school graduate in  
14 his family; he continued his education at James Madison University, where he became involved with the  
15 institution's College Democrats and was selected to participate in the prestigious Virginia Governor's Fellows  
16 Program under Governor Mark Warner; and

17 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney began working for the Democratic Party of Virginia in 2006 and ultimately  
18 became executive director of the organization, in which capacity he supported President Barack Obama's  
19 successful presidential campaign in 2008; and

20 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney subsequently worked as a deputy campaign manager and deputy director of the  
21 transition team for Governor Terry McAuliffe in 2013, then joined the McAuliffe administration as Secretary  
22 of the Commonwealth; and

23 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney made history as the first Black Secretary of the Commonwealth and earned a  
24 reputation as a champion for civil rights through his determined advocacy for the restoration of voting rights  
25 to felons who had completed their sentences; and

26 WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service, Levar Stoney ran for and was elected as the 80th mayor of  
27 Richmond in 2016; his tenure has been defined by significant investment in children and families, affordable  
28 housing, economic development, poverty reduction, education, and public safety; and

29 WHEREAS, as mayor, Levar Stoney led the historic effort to remove all Confederate monuments from  
30 Richmond, transforming the city's landscape and moving it toward a more inclusive future by redefining the  
31 city's identity as the "Capital of Compassion"; and

32 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney ensured that Richmond's true history is told by bringing together state, local,  
33 and community leaders to develop The Shockoe Project, a comprehensive program to provide interpretation  
34 of the historic Shockoe Bottom neighborhood; and

35 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney increased funding for Richmond Public Schools by 58 percent and allocated  
36 more than \$350 million for the construction of new schools; he oversaw the establishment of high-quality  
37 after-school programs for every elementary and middle school student and led the way in creating the Child  
38 Care and Education Trust Fund, which will expand access to child care and early education opportunities for  
39 Richmond's youngest residents; and

40 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney increased funding for affordable housing by more than 1,200 percent, investing  
41 \$50 million of the city's Capital Improvement Plan budget over the next five years in affordable housing  
42 projects and partnering with Local Initiatives Support Corporation to match the city's contribution; he also  
43 created the Commonwealth's first Eviction Diversion Program and significantly expanded shelter and support  
44 services for the unhoused; and

45 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney raised the minimum wage for city employees from \$11 an hour to \$20 an hour,  
46 reflecting his commitment to improving the livelihood of the city's workforce, and created Richmond's first  
47 guaranteed income pilot program, also known as the Richmond Resilience Initiative, and the Pathways  
48 Program, which supports Richmond Public Schools graduates up to and through community college; over the  
49 course of his tenure, Richmond saw a 22 percent reduction in the poverty rate thanks in large part to these and  
50 other programs; and

51 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney spearheaded the approval of the Diamond District project, the largest  
52 economic development project in Richmond's history; and

53 WHEREAS, under Levar Stoney's leadership, Richmond achieved a AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings,  
54 reflecting the city's strong financial responsibility and enhancing its economic future; and

55 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney helped make city parks and green spaces more accessible by adding more than  
56 140 acres of park land and increasing funding for the Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation, and  
57 Community Facilities by 73 percent since 2017, ensuring that new community centers and park amenities are  
58 made available to as many city residents as possible; and

59 WHEREAS, Levar Stoney was named as the Richmond Times-Dispatch 2016 Person of the Year, and he  
60 has been selected as a Rodel Leadership Institute Fellow, a member of the NewDEAL Leaders network, a  
61 Mayor's Institute on City Design Fellow, a Daniel Rose Land Use Fellow, and a Bloomberg Harvard City  
62 Leadership Initiative participant; and

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59        WHEREAS, during Levar Stoney's tenure as mayor, Richmond was selected by as the number one Place  
60 to Live in Virginia by Travel + Leisure magazine and as the number one Best Town to Visit by CNN, along  
61 with a host of other accolades; and

62        WHEREAS, Levar Stoney's leadership extends beyond Richmond; he served as an advisory board  
63 member of the United States Conference of Mayors and as president of the Democratic Mayors Association;  
64 he is a life member of the NAACP, a board member of the Great Aspirations Scholarship Program, and a  
65 member of the executive committee for the Democratic National Committee; and

66        WHEREAS, after completing his second term as mayor of Richmond, Levar Stoney plans to pursue new  
67 opportunities to serve the residents of Richmond and the Commonwealth as a whole; now, therefore, be it

68        RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Levar Marcus Stoney hereby be commended for his legacy  
69 of service as the 80th mayor of Richmond; and, be it

70        RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for  
71 presentation to Levar Marcus Stoney as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his  
72 achievements in service to the Richmond community.