

25105781D

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 323

Offered January 30, 2025

Commending Billy Wagner.

Patrons—Hackworth, Aird, Bagby, Boysko, Carroll Foy, Cifers, Craig, Deeds, DeSteph, Diggs, Durant, Ebbin, Favola, French, Hashmi, Head, Jordan, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McDougle, McPike, Mulchi, Obenshain, Peake, Pekarsky, Perry, Pillion, Reeves, Roem, Rouse, Salim, Srinivasan, Stanley, Stuart, Sturtevant, Suetterlein, Surovell, VanValkenburg and Williams Graves; Delegates: Davis, Morefield and Scott, D.

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner is a Virginia legend through and through, a native of Marion who grew up in Tannersville in Tazewell County, who built a reputation as one of the greatest closers in the history of Major League Baseball over his 16-year professional career; and

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner was selected for induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Baseball Writers' Association of America in 2025; and

WHEREAS, born a natural right hander, Billy Wagner showed extraordinary determination and resolve from a young age as he overcame two breaks in his right arm by learning to throw with his left arm; despite this setback, he would go on to achieve exceptional power as a pitcher, with the ability to throw 100 miles per hour throughout his career; and

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner was a standout on the Tazewell High School team and played from 1991 to 1993 at Ferrum College, where he posted a 17–3 record and achieved a National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) record when he averaged 19.1 strikeouts per nine innings in the 1992 season; and

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner was drafted 12th overall by the Houston Astros in 1993 and made his Major League Baseball (MLB) debut on September 13, 1995; he would ultimately record 225 saves while pitching with the Houston Astros between 1995 and 2003, a franchise record; and

WHEREAS, after the Houston Astros, Billy Wagner pitched for the Philadelphia Phillies from 2004 to 2005, the New York Mets from 2006 to 2009, the Boston Red Sox in 2009, and the Atlanta Braves in 2010; and

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner's cumulative statistics at the end of his career included a 2.31 earned-run-average, 1,196 strikeouts, and 422 saves, which places him eighth all-time in MLB history for saves; and

WHEREAS, several of Billy Wagner's career statistics, including an opponents' batting average of .187, 11.92 strikeouts per nine innings, and 5.99 hits per nine innings, rank him first all-time among pitchers who threw at least 900 innings; and

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner's baseball accolades include seven all-star team selections and the Rolands Relief Man Award in 1999; and

WHEREAS, prior to his induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, Billy Wagner was inducted into the Ferrum College Sports Hall of Fame in 2003, the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2012, the College Baseball Hall of Fame in 2019, and the Astros Hall of Fame in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Billy Wagner is notably both the first NCAA Division III player and the first Virginian from west of Culpeper to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, since 2013, Billy Wagner has supported the development of young aspiring baseball players as the head coach of the baseball team at the Miller School of Albemarle, where his legacy in the sport will undoubtedly continue to grow for years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Billy Wagner for his induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Billy Wagner as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his achievements and appreciation for the great pride he has brought to the Commonwealth.