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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 717

Offered February 17, 2025

Commending the Lionsbridge Football Club.

Patrons—Price, Green, Hayes, Hodges, Leftwich, Scott, D., Simonds and Ward; Senators: Craig, Diggs, Locke and Lucas

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club was launched in 2017 on the Virginia Peninsula as a community-driven soccer team with a mission to deliver affordable family entertainment and to serve the communities of Newport News, Hampton, York County, Poquoson, Williamsburg, and James City County; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club has since expanded its activities and partnerships to serve the communities of Suffolk, Portsmouth, Smithfield, Isle of Wight, Chesapeake, and Gloucester; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club competes in USL League Two, the top pre-professional soccer league in North America, consisting of more than 140 teams across the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club has become incredibly popular since its founding and boasts one of the most loyal fanbases anywhere in the country, averaging between 2,000 and 3,000 fans per game at the beautiful TowneBank Stadium on the campus of Christopher Newport University; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club has finished in the top four of USL League Two teams nationally in attendance every season since its inception, and the club welcomed its 100,000th fan during the 2024 season; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club features some of the best collegiate soccer players in America, with 20 of its former players moving on to the professional ranks both in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club partners with a different nonprofit organization at every single home game, raising money and awareness for more than 50 charitable organizations thus far through an on-field recognition at halftime; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club serves more than 1,000 youth each year through its summer camps, Lionsbridge Soccer School, and free soccer clinics in partnership with Food Lion, Riverside Health System, and Chick-fil-A of the Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club has partnered with the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank and Food Lion to donate 82,000 meals in the fight against hunger in their community; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club offers hands-on experience for college students to kick off their careers in sports business, with several interns going on to work professionally in the sports industry with high-profile organizations such as the Washington Commanders, Kansas City Chiefs, Boston Red Sox, and more; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club is supported by an army of volunteers and host families that create a tight-knit bond between the club and its community; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club was the 2023 USL League Two national runner-up out of 122 teams, representing the Virginia Peninsula and the Commonwealth at the national championship game in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club competed in the 2023 Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup, the oldest and most prestigious soccer tournament in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club won three straight USL League Two Chesapeake Division Championships during the 2022, 2023, and 2024 seasons against in-state rivals from Virginia Beach, Charlottesville, Leesburg, and Winchester as well as two Maryland-based clubs; and

WHEREAS, the Lionsbridge Football Club hosted the USL League Two playoffs each of the last four summers on the Virginia Peninsula, bringing in valuable sports tourism that made an economic impact while uniting the citizens of the Virginia Peninsula community behind a truly local team in pursuit of one common goal; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Lionsbridge Football Club for its accomplishments and service to the Virginia Peninsula community; and, be it

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