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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 728

Offered February 17, 2025

Commending Heman Bekele.

Patrons—Watts, Bennett-Parker, Carr, Cohen, Cousins, Feggans, Gardner, Glass, Helmer, Hernandez, Herring, Jones, Krizek, Laufer, Lopez, Maldonado, Martinez, McClure, Rasoul, Reaser, Seibold, Shin, Simon, Simonds, Singh, Sullivan, Tran, Ward and Willett; Senators: Marsden and Pekarsky

WHEREAS, Heman Bekele, a student at Carter G. Woodson High School in Fairfax, was selected as TIME magazine's 2024 Kid of the Year for his contributions to medical science; and

WHEREAS, Heman Bekele was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and moved to the United States with his family when he was four years old; he developed an interest in chemistry around that time and enjoyed creating household science experiments for many years; and

WHEREAS, after reading about a topical medication, imiquimod, which is typically used as part of a broader treatment plan for skin cancer, Heman Bekele envisioned a version of the medication that was readily available and usable as a standalone treatment for early stages of skin cancer; and

WHEREAS, Heman Bekele theorized that the medication could be mixed into a bar of soap with a lipid-based nanoparticle that would linger on the skin, similar to a moisturizer or fragrance, and presented this concept to 3M Company as part of its Young Scientist Challenge; and

WHEREAS, Heman Bekele won the challenge, earning \$25,000 to support his research, then cultivated a partnership with Vito Rebecca, a molecular biologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, who is now serving as principal investigator for testing; and

WHEREAS, Heman Bekele has continued to excel in his studies at Carter G. Woodson High School, where he is a multi-instrumentalist in the school marching band and enjoys playing basketball and chess, all while assisting Vito Rebecca with lab work and promotion for his potentially revolutionary cancer treatment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Heman Bekele on the occasion of his selection as TIME magazine's 2024 Kid of the Year; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Heman Bekele as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his incredible achievements and best wishes for future success.

INTRODUCED

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