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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 418

Offered February 17, 2025

Commending Hamidullah Noori.

Patrons—VanValkenburg; Delegate: Rasoul

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori, a hardworking chef and entrepreneur, has helped numerous Afghan refugees find purpose and build a stronger sense of community in the Richmond area; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori was born in Afghanistan and began working to support his family at a young age after his father was killed by the Taliban; he began his career as a chef at the age of 18 and honed his skills at the Intercontinental Hotel Kabul and the Kabul Serena Hotel; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori arrived in the United States in 2015 and opened a restaurant featuring authentic Afghan cuisine, the Mantu, in Carytown in 2019; he has since opened an additional location in Short Pump, as well as the Mantu Market, an Afghan deli and bakery in Henrico County; and

WHEREAS, after recognizing that many Afghan refugees were struggling to find work or suffering from depression and anxiety due to language barriers and other cultural challenges, Hamidullah Noori reoriented his businesses to focus on uplifting women and children in need; and

WHEREAS, Hamidullah Noori began hiring women refugees from Afghanistan and teaching them all aspects of the restaurant business, which not only helped build a sense of fellowship between refugee women in the region, but created a valuable support network that has allowed them to better care for their families; and

WHEREAS, Mantu Market, in particular, is dedicated to empowering women, and Hamidullah Noori has envisioned the establishment as a meditation center for Afghan women who are facing anxiety and depression by offering support in various ways; and

WHEREAS, in addition to teaching them how to cook, manage the store, and learn English daily, Hamidullah Noori has helped women achieve other life skills, including through the acquisition of a vehicle to help train them how to drive and assist them in passing the behind-the-wheel driving test, which is greatly needed; and

WHEREAS, every month, Hamidullah Noori's businesses allocate funds to support Afghan women and children residing in rural areas of Afghanistan; this initiative aims to save lives by providing critical assistance to people in need within those communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Hamidullah Noori for his life-changing contributions to refugee women and families in Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Hamidullah Noori as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his achievements as a restaurateur and service to the Afghan refugee community.

INTRODUCED

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