

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 455

Commending the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2025

WHEREAS, for 25 years, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth has advocated for the prevention of tobacco use and empowered young people to make healthy lifestyle choices; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the attorneys general of 46 states, including Virginia, signed a Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) with the largest tobacco manufacturers in the United States to recover costs associated with the treatment of smoking-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth was created by the General Assembly in 1999 and was allocated a portion of MSA funding to lead the Commonwealth's youth tobacco use prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, thanks in large part to the achievements of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, the Commonwealth has seen a dramatic drop in cigarette smoking over the past 25 years, with a 93 percent overall decrease in underage smoking that outpaced the 88 percent decrease at the national level; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's grants and marketing campaigns have directly supported communities across the Commonwealth by preventing more than 154,000 middle school and high school students from smoking each year, saving the lives of an estimated 49,000 young Virginians who may have died prematurely from a smoking-related illness; and

WHEREAS, due to the significantly lower health care costs between smokers and non-smokers, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth has saved an estimated \$2.46 billion in health care expenses; and

WHEREAS, given this incredible success, the General Assembly expanded the mission of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth to include childhood obesity prevention in 2009 and youth substance use prevention in 2017; and

WHEREAS, more than 10,000 Virginia high school students have been trained to be health advocates in their communities through Y Street, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's award-winning youth volunteer initiative; and

WHEREAS, since 2013, more than 280,000 Virginians have also participated in more than 4,500 Rev Your Bev events, part of a campaign by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth to promote water as a healthy beverage option; and

WHEREAS, in total, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's tobacco and substance use prevention programs have reached an estimated 1.5 million young people over the past 25 years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth hereby be commended on the occasion of its 25th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the foundation's legacy of accomplishments and success at helping young people make healthy choices.

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