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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 76

Offered January 22, 2026

Commending the Virginia Coalition for Open Government.

Patron—Anderson

WHEREAS, for 30 years, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government has advocated for greater transparency in local and state government in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, established in 1996, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government is a nonpartisan, nonprofit alliance of citizens, journalists, advocacy groups, government employees and officials, and others who are committed to enhancing accountability in the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government works collaboratively with legislators, public officials, educators, First Amendment advocates, and interested citizens to develop legislative proposals that strengthen and expand protection for public access to government meetings and records; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government was a tireless advocate for the successful creation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council (FOIA Council) and now regularly participates in the council's advisory work groups and subcommittees; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government maintains the only free online archive of opinions interpreting FOIA issued by state and federal courts, the FOIA Council, and the Office of the Attorney General of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government maintains free email, telephone, and form-based hotlines to assist the public in understanding how FOIA works, handling approximately 500 inquiries each year; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government publishes free daily, monthly, and annual newsletters and maintains a steady presence on social media platforms to engage with and inform Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government sponsors an annual legal fellowship and a legislative-session internship to educate and support future leaders in transparency, public records, and open government; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government produces an annual conference on open-government issues at historic and unique settings around the Commonwealth and bestows annual awards for members of the public, government officials, and media professionals who have made outstanding contributions to open government; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government offers classes through university continuing education programs and provides credit-based programming for attorneys and for FOIA officers; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government authored seven reports for the volunteer group Transparency Virginia that exposed gaps in legislative transparency and led to legislative reforms and rule changes; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government collected, distributed, and drafted rules for local governments to use while holding public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government has assisted in the establishment of similar open-government entities in other states, and in 2022, it became the administrator of the National Freedom of Information Coalition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia Coalition for Open Government on the occasion of its 30th anniversary in 2026; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Coalition for Open Government as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its outstanding commitment to the tenets of open government in the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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