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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 22

Offered January 27, 2026

Commending the Academy Center of the Arts.

Patron—Peake

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts in Lynchburg is celebrating the 120th anniversary of the historic Academy of Music Theatre, a treasured cultural landmark that first opened its doors on Main Street in 1905; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts stands today as one of Central Virginia's premier arts institutions, shaped and strengthened over many generations through the steadfast support of corporate partners, local businesses, and community members who have invested in its mission and growth; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts provides year-round educational opportunities in visual arts, ceramics, and performing arts, offering eight Academy Youth Theatre productions annually as well as specialized workshops ranging from voice acting to stage combat; and

WHEREAS, the pottery studio at the Academy Center of the Arts recently expanded to provide additional storage to support increased demand; the studio now serves 175 students per week and complements the work of other local partners, including the pottery programs offered by the Lynchburg Parks and Recreation Department; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts enriches the region through 37 annual rotating exhibits across six venues, monthly First Friday events, and its Artistica shop, which provides local artists with a place to display and sell their work; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts fosters inclusion and creativity through programs such as the Young Storytellers initiative, launched to support students who face communication challenges, and Opening Minds through Art, which serves individuals living with dementia; and

WHEREAS, through its art access programs, the Academy Center of the Arts offers scholarships, ticket subsidies, and a wide range of community-based opportunities, including Academy in Motion, a mobile classroom that brings arts education to residents in the City of Lynchburg and three surrounding counties; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts supports students and families through monthly field trips, remote arts education, and outreach programs in schools, libraries, and human services organizations, extending its mission far beyond its physical campus; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts maintains four venues, which host more than 160 annual rental events and serve as home to many resident companies, including the Jefferson Choral Society, the Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra, Opera on the James, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, and the Charlottesville Ballet; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts also works closely with many valued community partners, such as the Lynchburg Pops, Ecclesia School of the Arts, and Masterworx Theater; and

WHEREAS, through its signature series, The Academy Presents, the Academy Center of the Arts brings world-class artists to the region, with past performers including Melissa Etheridge, The Blind Boys of Alabama, and Black Violin; the institution also provides free programming, such as the Animation Festival, the Clay Festival, and a widely attended annual Juneteenth Celebration; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts led a broad community effort to restore and revitalize the Academy of Music Theatre, which had stood empty for nearly half of its 120-year history, but once again offers robust programming to further enhance cultural life in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Academy Center of the Arts continues to grow through the dedication of its community and business partners, who have contributed to its success and whose continued involvement ensures that the institution will flourish for future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Academy Center of the Arts hereby be commended for its outstanding contributions to arts, culture, and education in Central Virginia on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the Academy of Music Theatre; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Academy Center of the Arts as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration and best wishes for continued success.