

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 83

Commending the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 12, 2026
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 16, 2026

WHEREAS, for 50 years, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work has advanced the profession of clinical social work and provided opportunities for networking, mentorship, and education for its members; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work was founded in 1975 by a small group of Virginia social workers who came together to advocate for recognition of their profession; and

WHEREAS, the visionary leadership of Eloise Agger, one of the founding members and the first president of the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, was critical in the development of the organization's mission and values; and

WHEREAS, Eloise Agger recognized the importance of uniting clinical social workers in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., with leaders working together across state and district lines to advocate for the establishment of consistent licensure for clinical social workers in all three jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the third president of the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, Vesta Downer, organized advocacy efforts in Richmond that led to the successful passage of a Virginia social work licensure bill in 1978; the bill clearly defined the clinical social work practice and protected Virginians by establishing oversight by a newly created Board of Social Work; and

WHEREAS, the successful passage of the licensure bill eventually led to a vendorship law, which mandated that health insurance companies reimburse clinical social workers for services provided to their patients, and subsequently led to a bill that established parity for clinical social workers with psychiatrists and psychologists in the provision of independently practiced mental health services; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the work done in the Commonwealth towards licensure, vendorship, and parity, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work was also instrumental in establishing clinical social work licensure laws in Maryland in 1977 and in Washington, D.C., in 1982; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 and 2017, leaders and members of the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work participated in two "Walk Out of the Darkness" events to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, raising charitable donations for this worthy cause; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work made financial contributions to local food banks, the Pro Bono Counseling Project, and a local domestic violence shelter; and

WHEREAS, the Anti-Racism Taskforce played an important advisory role for the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work leadership team and created an innovative new program to make the Society more inclusive; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work worked closely with the Virginia Society of Clinical Social Work to advocate, successfully, for the Commonwealth to become one of the seven founding states of the national Social Work Licensure Compact; and

WHEREAS, the Social Work Licensure Compact will allow clinical social workers to conduct video mental health evaluations and psychotherapy sessions in all participating states and help reduce shortages of clinical social workers in key areas of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work's current mission is to promote the highest standard of clinical practice by ensuring the stability, efficacy, and viability of clinical social work; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work achieves this mission through advocacy, addressing issues impacting its clients and the profession, clinical educational offerings and activities that support the professional development of its members, events that promote a sense of professional community, and activities that support the profession's commitment to social justice; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work for its years of dedication to the field of clinical social work and commitment to the well-being of Virginians on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Karla J. Abney, president of the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, and Judith Gallant, director of legislation and advocacy, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the

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organization's longstanding service to Virginians.