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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 174

Offered February 24, 2026

Commending the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.

Patrons—Hayes, Cole, N.T., Maldonado and McQuinn; Senator: Williams Graves

WHEREAS, the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, a collegiate athletic conference based in Norfolk that comprises eight historically Black college and universities along the Atlantic coastline, celebrates its 55th anniversary of intercollegiate competition in the 2025–2026 academic year; and

WHEREAS, the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) was founded in 1970 by seven institutions of higher education that held a shared commitment to promoting athletic excellence, academic achievement, and cultural pride, and its first football season was held in 1971; and

WHEREAS, after initially competing at the Division II level, the MEAC was classified as a Division I conference by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on June 8, 1980; and

WHEREAS, the MEAC currently supports NCAA Division I competition in men's and women's basketball, women's bowling, men's and women's cross country, football, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's track and field, softball, and volleyball, and has automatic qualifying bids for NCAA postseason play in seven sports; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the MEAC has evolved over the years and today includes Coppin State University, Delaware State University, Howard University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Morgan State University, Norfolk State University, North Carolina Central University, and South Carolina State University; and

WHEREAS, a number of accomplished commissioners have led the MEAC, including its first full-time commissioner, Kenneth A. Free, who served from 1978 to 1996, and Sonja Stills, its current commissioner and the first female commissioner in the conference's history; and

WHEREAS, the MEAC has nurtured thousands of student-athletes over the years, many of whom have gone on to achieve success beyond their collegiate careers, including by playing in the National Football League or by competing in the Olympics; and

WHEREAS, the achievements of the MEAC are the result of the leadership and collaboration of its member institutions, the hard work and determination of its student-athletes, and the steadfast support of its proud alumni; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference on the occasion of its 55th anniversary of intercollegiate competition; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the conference's contributions to athletic competition in the Commonwealth and beyond.

INTRODUCED

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