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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 196

Offered March 2, 2026

Commending the staff of Theogony.

Patron—McPike

WHEREAS, the staff of *Theogony*, the student newspaper at Alexandria City High School, received the Courage in Student Journalism Award from the Student Press Law Center and the National Scholastic Press Association at the Fall National High School Journalism Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, on November 15, 2025; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the Courage in Student Journalism Award, the staff of *Theogony* will receive the Joseph W. Shoquist Freedom of the Press Award at the Southern Interscholastic Press Association Convention in Columbia, South Carolina, in March 2026; and

WHEREAS, both accolades presented to *Theogony* recognize its staff's commitment to exercising their First Amendment rights and defending press freedoms; and

WHEREAS, after a series of high-profile stories brought scrutiny from Alexandria City Public Schools officials and the proposal of a stricter media policy within the division, staff at *Theogony* partnered with the Student Press Law Center to present their own policy, called "Voices Unbound," which was modeled after tenets of the New Voices student free press movement; and

WHEREAS, despite initial resistance to their ideas, the staff at *Theogony* continued to advocate for their cause, garnering support both throughout the community and from national journalism organizations and receiving coverage from major news outlets; and

WHEREAS, the 2024–2025 staff of *Theogony* included co-editor-in-chiefs James Libresco and Casey Donahue, news editor Julia Gwin, comics editor Rozalia Finkelstein, opinion editor Max Carpenter, entertainment editor Nadja Duss, features editor Pablo Cruz-Rivera, and sports editor Maxwell Jones-Lachance, as well as Arafat Somith, Michael Sweeney, Isabel Shultz, Imani Sanders, Liam Brown, Leo Maucieri, Noah Sternberg, and Christian Orrell; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the hard work and dedication of its student-journalists, *Theogony* has secured its editorial independence for the benefit of the students and community at Alexandria City High School; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the staff of *Theogony* for receiving the 2025 Courage in Student Journalism Award and the 2026 Joseph W. Shoquist Freedom of the Press Award; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the staff of *Theogony* as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the newspaper's efforts to defend press freedoms and serve the Alexandria City High School community.

INTRODUCED

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