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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 280

Offered March 9, 2026

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Gerald Edward Connolly.

Patrons—Watts and Sewell; Senators: Aird, Bagby, Bennett-Parker, Boysko, Carroll Foy, Cifers, Craig, Deeds, DeSteph, Diggs, Durant, Favola, French, Hackworth, Head, Jones, Jordan, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McDougle, McPike, Mulchi, Obenshain, Peake, Pekarsky, Perry, Pillion, Reeves, Roem, Rouse, Salim, Srinivasan, Stanley, Stuart, Sturtevant, Suetterlein, Surovell, VanValkenburg and Williams Graves

WHEREAS, the Honorable Gerald Edward Connolly, a dedicated public servant and visionary leader, died on May 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly was born in Boston, attended Maryknoll College Seminary in Illinois, and received his master of public administration degree from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly moved to Washington, D.C., in 1972 with the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation, where he rose from education director to executive director while also serving as executive director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly served the residents of Fairfax County with extraordinary vision and compassion on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, including 13 years as the Providence District supervisor and five years as chair; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Gerald Connolly fiercely advocated for those he represented, from the most vulnerable to federal workers and contractors, as well as for national and international business interests as vice-chair of the Economic Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the naming of a cross-county trail in Fairfax County in Gerald Connolly's honor was a gesture of appreciation for both his advocacy for parks and recreation and the countless improvements across Fairfax County that bear his imprint; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly's legacy encompasses the long-sought expansion of Metrorail to Washington Dulles International Airport, the transformation of Tysons into an urban center, and an innovative commitment to affordable housing, as well as to other essential services, that will benefit future generations of Fairfax County residents; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly worked tirelessly on behalf of those he represented, making a positive impact not just on Fairfax County but also on the region by serving as the chair of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, and the board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly knew the power of county governments working together to improve the lives of Virginians and recognized the common challenges facing localities large and small and the power of speaking in one voice; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly invested many hours in nurturing relationships with elected officials from counties across the Commonwealth through his service on the board of the Virginia Association of Counties, including as president, and by serving as the chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Legislative Committee; and

WHEREAS, after his election to represent the Commonwealth's 11th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives in 2008, Gerald Connolly worked diligently on behalf of his constituents for more than 15 years in the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly never forgot his roots as a county supervisor, remaining a staunch advocate for local governments, both as a founding member and co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus of Former Local Elected Officials and as a sponsor of the Restore the Partnership Act, which seeks to strengthen intergovernmental collaboration at all levels; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly was a skilled statesman on the international stage and an accomplished legislator who was ranked by the Center for Effective Lawmaking as the single most effective member of the 117th United States Congress; he sought to make pragmatic changes to affect his constituents' everyday life, including through his focus on cybersecurity, technology, and government oversight; and

WHEREAS, to know Gerald Connolly was to be invigorated by his sharp intellect, vast erudition, and fierce advocacy, charmed by his trademark Irish humor and conviviality, awed by his courage and grace in the face of illness and adversity, and enriched by his ethos, "to live life to give back to others and to 'bloom where you are planted'"; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Connolly will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his beloved wife, Catherine; his daughter, Caitlin; and numerous other family members, friends, colleagues on both sides of the

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55 aisle, and residents whose lives he touched; now therefore, be it
56 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note
57 with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Gerald Edward Connolly, whose dedication and legacy of
58 service inspired all who knew him; and, be it
59 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for
60 presentation to the family of the Honorable Gerald Edward Connolly as an expression of the General
61 Assembly's respect for his memory and gratitude for his preeminent legacy of public service.