

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 273

Commending Blue Ridge Literacy.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 10, 2026
Agreed to by the Senate, March 12, 2026

WHEREAS, for more than 40 years, Blue Ridge Literacy has helped adults in the Roanoke Valley achieve their personal and professional goals through education and support; and

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Literacy was established in 1985 by two librarians who recognized that many adults in the community were struggling with everyday tasks and professional development due to underdeveloped literacy skills; and

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Literacy offers in-person and online courses on English as a second language, digital literacy, and citizenship preparation, as well as one-on-one tutoring services; and

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Literacy ensures that programs are designed to meet the unique needs of every learner by tailoring lessons to their specific goals and interests; and

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Literacy offers a new citizenship preparation class, which is supported through the School Support for Afghan Students Program and hosted at the Community Empowerment Center at Booker T. Washington; and

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Literacy partners with the City of Roanoke to provide advanced and post-advanced learners with My City Academy, a free leadership program that helps refugees and immigrants engage in local government; and

WHEREAS, Russ Merritt, the former executive director of Blue Ridge Literacy, strengthened the organization by engaging with the community to bring in new generations of volunteers and pursued diverse sources of funding to ensure a stable future; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the organization's achievements, Ahoon Salem, the current executive director of Blue Ridge Literacy, was presented with the Eva Stitt Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to supporting the mental health and wellness of refugee and immigrant families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Literacy has fulfilled its mission through the hard work and dedication of its staff members, teachers, tutors, and volunteers, as well as generous support from community partners; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Blue Ridge Literacy on the occasion of its 40th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Blue Ridge Literacy as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's work to build stronger communities by promoting education and literacy skills.

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