ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 433

Commending Sheila Coates.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 13, 2026

WHEREAS, Sheila Coates has dedicated more than 40 years of service toward improving the lives of women in Northern Virginia, the Commonwealth, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Sheila Coates observed from an early age that Black women were underrepresented in management roles in education and government, and that a large number of highly educated Black women were being overlooked in the professional world; and

WHEREAS, in response to these early observations and in collaboration with like-minded advocates, Sheila Coates founded Black Women United for Action (BWUFA) in 1985 to organize grassroots efforts focused on promoting women's issues and family preservation; and

WHEREAS, BWUFA is an ethnically diverse group that has grown from its roots as a small nonprofit in Fairfax County to include the surrounding cities and counties of the Washington metropolitan area, and has expanded as far as the Northeastern United States and into Canada; and

WHEREAS, as it has grown, BWUFA has expanded its purview to include multiple forms of assistance to "at-risk" communities, as well as promotion of a more general awareness of Black history as a valuable and essential part of American history; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Sheila Coates, and in collaboration with numerous partners and supporters, BWUFA has advocated for women and youths, fostering an environment of activism, empowerment, and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, among Sheila Coates' achievements and contributions has been her work acquiring federal grant funding for IT job readiness training programs for "at-risk" mothers, establishing the Annual Slave Memorial Wreath-Laying Ceremony at Mt. Vernon and the Nikki Giovanni Youth Writer Awards, and establishing the BWUFA Fellowship at the George Washington Presidential Library, along with numerous other projects and initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Sheila Coates' decades of work have served to support vulnerable families, assist disenfranchised community members, and empower women to pursue new and greater opportunities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby commend Sheila Coates for her long career in service to improving the lives of women in the Commonwealth and beyond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Sheila Coates as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her accomplishments.