

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 822

Commending Levar Marcus Stoney.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates July 18, 2024

WHEREAS, Levar Marcus Stoney, a dedicated public servant who has demonstrated his commitment to social equity and community development at both the local and state levels, has ably served as the mayor of Richmond for two terms from 2017 through 2024; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney grew up in Hampton Roads and was a first generation high school graduate in his family; he continued his education at James Madison University, where he became involved with the institution's College Democrats and was selected to participate in the prestigious Virginia Governor's Fellows Program under Governor Mark Warner; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney began working for the Democratic Party of Virginia in 2006 and ultimately became executive director of the organization, in which capacity he supported President Barack Obama's successful presidential campaign in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney subsequently worked as a deputy campaign manager and deputy director of the transition team for Governor Terry McAuliffe in 2013, then joined the McAuliffe administration as Secretary of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney made history as the first Black Secretary of the Commonwealth and earned a reputation as a champion for civil rights through his determined advocacy for the restoration of voting rights to felons who had completed their sentences; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service, Levar Stoney ran for and was elected as the 80th mayor of Richmond in 2016; his tenure has been defined by significant investment in children and families, affordable housing, economic development, poverty reduction, education, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, as mayor, Levar Stoney led the historic effort to remove all Confederate monuments from Richmond, transforming the city's landscape and moving it toward a more inclusive future by redefining the city's identity as the "Capital of Compassion"; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney ensured that Richmond's true history is told by bringing together state, local, and community leaders to develop The Shockoe Project, a comprehensive program to provide interpretation of the historic Shockoe Bottom neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney increased funding for Richmond Public Schools by 58 percent and allocated more than \$350 million for the construction of new schools; he oversaw the establishment of high-quality after-school programs for every elementary and middle school student and led the way in creating the Child Care and Education Trust Fund, which will expand access to child care and early education opportunities for Richmond's youngest residents; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney increased funding for affordable housing by more than 1,200 percent, investing \$50 million of the city's Capital Improvement Plan budget over the next five years in affordable housing projects and partnering with Local Initiatives Support Corporation to match the city's contribution; he also created the Commonwealth's first Eviction Diversion Program and significantly expanded shelter and support services for the unhoused; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney raised the minimum wage for city employees from \$11 an hour to \$20 an hour, reflecting his commitment to improving the livelihood of the city's workforce, and created Richmond's first guaranteed income pilot program, also known as the Richmond Resilience Initiative, and the Pathways Program, which supports Richmond Public Schools graduates up to and through community college; over the course of his tenure, Richmond saw a 22 percent reduction in the poverty rate thanks in large part to these and other programs; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney spearheaded the approval of the Diamond District project, the largest economic development project in Richmond's history; and

WHEREAS, under Levar Stoney's leadership, Richmond achieved a AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings, reflecting the city's strong financial responsibility and enhancing its economic future; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney helped make city parks and green spaces more accessible by adding more than 140 acres of park land and increasing funding for the Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities by 73 percent since 2017, ensuring that new community centers and park amenities are made available to as many city residents as possible; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney was named as the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* 2016 Person of the Year, and he has been selected as a Rodel Leadership Institute Fellow, a member of the NewDEAL Leaders network, a Mayor's Institute on City Design Fellow, a Daniel Rose Land Use Fellow, and a Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative participant; and

WHEREAS, during Levar Stoney's tenure as mayor, Richmond was selected as the number one Place

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to Live in Virginia by *Travel + Leisure* magazine and as the number one Best Town to Visit by CNN, along with a host of other accolades; and

WHEREAS, Levar Stoney's leadership extends beyond Richmond; he served as an advisory board member of the United States Conference of Mayors and as president of the Democratic Mayors Association; he is a life member of the NAACP, a board member of the Great Aspirations Scholarship Program, and a member of the executive committee for the Democratic National Committee; and

WHEREAS, after completing his second term as mayor of Richmond, Levar Stoney plans to pursue new opportunities to serve the residents of Richmond and the Commonwealth as a whole; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Levar Marcus Stoney hereby be commended for his legacy of service as the 80th mayor of Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Levar Marcus Stoney as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his achievements in service to the Richmond community.