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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 609

Offered May 13, 2024

Prefiled May 10, 2024

Commending Pamela E. Bridgewater.

Patrons—Cole, Clark, Glass, Hayes, McQuinn, Mundon King and Shin

WHEREAS, Pamela E. Bridgewater, a retired officer of the United States Foreign Service, represented the United States with distinction at postings around the world for more than 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Pamela Bridgewater grew up in Fredericksburg and graduated from the former Walker-Grant High School; she subsequently earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia State University and a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati, then completed additional postgraduate coursework at the American University School of International Service; and

WHEREAS, Pamela Bridgewater began her career as a college professor, teaching at Morgan State University and Bowie State University in Maryland and Voorhees University in South Carolina; she was a highly admired mentor to her students, some of whom went on to become state attorney generals, judges, foreign ministers, academics, and authors; and

WHEREAS, after joining the U.S. Department of State in 1980, Pamela Bridgewater was posted to Brussels, Belgium, as vice consul, then to Kingston, Jamaica, as a political officer; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1990s, Pamela Bridgewater became the first Black woman to serve as consul general in Durban, South Africa, and ultimately became the longest-serving United States diplomat in South Africa, establishing a high degree of trust and confidence with Nelson Mandela, then-president of South Africa, during the country's historic transition away from apartheid government; and

WHEREAS, Pamela Bridgewater next served as deputy chief of mission to the Bahamas and was attached to a peace mission during a period of civil war in Liberia; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her service and expertise, Pamela Bridgewater was appointed by President Bill Clinton as United States ambassador to Benin; she was reassigned as the ambassador to Ghana under President George W. Bush, then finished her career as ambassador to Jamaica under President Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, among many accolades for her personal and professional achievements, Pamela Bridgewater has received the National Coalition of 100 Black Women's Candace Award, the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, the Charles Cobb Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development, and three U.S. Department of State Superior Honor Awards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Pamela E. Bridgewater hereby be commended for her outstanding legacy of achievements as a career diplomat with the United States Foreign Service; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Pamela E. Bridgewater as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her accomplishments in service to the nation.