

NO. R-64. HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING
THE PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER IN BURLINGTON ON ITS 30TH
ANNIVERSARY.

(H.C.R.40)

Offered by: Representatives Wizowaty of Burlington, Aswad of Burlington, Atkins of Winooski, Bissonnette of Winooski, Bohi of Hartford, Branagan of Georgia, Bray of New Haven, Burke of Brattleboro, Conquest of Newbury, Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford, Davis of Washington, Donovan of Burlington, Fisher of Lincoln, Frank of Underhill, Geier of S. Burlington, Gilbert of Fairfax, Haas of Rochester, Head of S. Burlington, Jerman of Essex, Jewett of Ripton, Johnson of South Hero, Lanpher of Vergennes, Larson of Burlington, Lenes of Shelburne, Lorber of Burlington, Maier of Middlebury, Milkey of Brattleboro, Nease of Johnson, Nuovo of Middlebury, O'Brien of Richmond, Pearce of Richford, Peltz of Woodbury, Poirier of Barre City, Ram of Burlington, Shand of Weathersfield, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweaney of Windsor, Taylor of Barre City, Till of Jericho, Trombley of Grand Isle, Waite-Simpson of Essex, Webb of Shelburne, Weston of Burlington, Wheeler of Derby and Zuckerman of Burlington

Whereas, citizen activism has been a hallmark of Burlington, Vermont, and has helped make it one of the leaders in peace and social and economic justice work throughout the United States, and

Whereas, one of the leading voices of citizen activism in Burlington has been the Peace & Justice Center, which for 30 years has rallied people throughout the city and the state to “speak truth to power,” and

Whereas, the Peace & Justice Center was founded on January 29, 1979, as the Burlington Peace Coalition by Burlington residents who were deeply concerned about the ever-escalating nuclear arms race between our nation and the Soviet Union, and

Whereas, these activists tirelessly worked to bring the cause of nuclear disarmament, nonintervention, solidarity with people around the world struggling for better lives, as well as peace and economic and racial justice for

people in our own communities to the mainstream of our society through popular education, petition initiatives, and direct action, and

Whereas, the Peace & Justice Center was instrumental gaining approval for a nuclear weapons freeze resolution on Burlington's and 16 other towns' town meeting ballots in 1981, thereby kicking off a statewide movement that saw 177 Vermont municipalities vote for the freeze at their town meetings, and

Whereas, the votes in Vermont influenced a national movement that brought one million people to New York City for the June 12, 1982, Nuclear Disarmament March and led to a major breakthrough in relations between the superpowers and an end to the arms race, and

Whereas, throughout the 1980s, the Peace & Justice Center organized to oppose U.S. involvement in wars in Central America, and

Whereas, a lasting legacy of the Peace & Justice Center's Central America related organizing activities is the creation of the Burlington-Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, sister city relationship, and

Whereas, the Peace & Justice Center was one of the first to speak out against war with Iraq and continues to do this while also providing Burlington's and other Vermont youth with education about alternatives to military service, and

Whereas, in the early 1990s, the Peace & Justice Center was instrumental in the community organizing in Burlington that led to Burlington Electric

Department's embarking on an \$11 million energy efficiency–demand side management bond instead of buying power from HydroQuebec, and

Whereas, this work for economic and racial justice for all people also led the Peace & Justice Center to create the first fair trade store in Burlington, the Peace & Justice Store, and

Whereas, other institutions in Burlington that have embedded principles of economic and racial justice in their economic activities include City Market and the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, and

Whereas, this emphasis on economic and racial justice also led the Peace & Justice Center to initiate the Vermont Job Gap Study in the mid-1990s, and

Whereas, this study in turn led the Vermont legislature to study the level of wages Vermont workers are required to pay for basic needs, bringing the concept of a livable wage to Vermont and leading to increases in the minimum wage and, in 2007, the indexing of the minimum wage to inflation, and

Whereas, this economic justice work continues through the current work of the Peace & Justice Center's Vermont Livable Wage Campaign and its efforts to obtain paid sick leave for Vermont workers, and

Whereas, the Peace & Justice Center continues to be a place where community members can gather, learn, discuss, organize, and fair-trade shop, thereby proving its continuing value and importance to Burlington and the state of Vermont, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the Peace & Justice Center on its 30th anniversary, and be it further

Resolved: That the secretary of state be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Peace & Justice Center in Burlington.