

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 74

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to commend Debbie Payne for honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as commissioner of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly pay tribute to those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Payne has served as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) for over five years; she will soon leave this position, bringing to a close an exemplary tenure of devoted, capable service to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Payne was appointed to head the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by Governor Bill Haslam on June 1, 2013, and since that time, she has guided the department with drive, commitment, and an affinity for the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the second commissioner of DIDD since it was established by the General Assembly as a stand-alone department effective January 15, 2011, Commissioner Payne previously served as the first Deputy Commissioner of DIDD; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, Debbie Payne served as a volunteer at Clover Bottom Developmental Center when she was just fourteen years old and later returned to the facility to work as a developmental technician; and

WHEREAS, a state employee since 1977, Commissioner Payne left State government for a three-year period in 2000 but returned to serve as the statewide director of Protection from Harm for DIDD, known at that time as the Division of Mental Retardation Services; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as commissioner, Debbie Payne has been responsible for the oversight of the department's state-owned and -operated community homes, the Harold Jordan Center, and the statewide community-based service delivery system supported by more than 1,800 employees, over 400 community providers, and three regional offices; and

WHEREAS, under her leadership, State government exited both the longstanding Arlington Lawsuit and the Clover Bottom Lawsuit and closed all three large congregate developmental centers; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, DIDD achieved network accreditation for Person-Centered Excellence, the first state service delivery system in the nation to do so, and won reaccreditation in 2019, still the only state service delivery system to receive such distinction; and

WHEREAS, she was recently awarded the Jim Henry Community Impact Award in recognition of her significant impact and vast contributions; and

WHEREAS, her many accomplishments aside, Commissioner Payne is fortunate to share both love and companionship with her husband, Mike, and her three children, two stepchildren, and five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Debbie Payne is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the Volunteer State, and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we commend Debbie Payne for her honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as commissioner of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.