

No. R-435. Senate concurrent resolution honoring former Senator Rita Whalen McCaffrey on her career accomplishments at Dismas of Vermont, Inc..

(S.C.R.49)

By all members of the Senate,

Whereas, for over three decades, Rita McCaffrey has directed programs designed to transition prisoners productively back into society, and

Whereas, in the 1970s she established the Thresholds/Decisions Program at the Marble Valley Correctional Facility, instructing prisoners on how to engage in the decision-making process, and

Whereas, in the 1980s, seeking to broaden her work in transitioning prisoners into society, Rita McCaffrey and her husband, Judge Francis McCaffrey, visited Dismas facilities in Tennessee and Ireland, and

Whereas, the mission of the nonsectarian Dismas program is to “reconcile prisoners with society and society with prisoners,” and

Whereas, this objective is achieved through the establishment of a Dismas House where former prisoners and students in transition live in a community with the active involvement of local volunteers and professional staff, and

Whereas, daily life at a Dismas House is based on consensus decision-making; and residents attend school or go to work during the day, share an evening meal, and attend 12-step instructional sessions, and

Whereas, after a year of organization and planning, in September 1986, with support from the Department of Corrections, Rita McCaffrey opened the Burlington Dismas House, and

Whereas, following the success of the Burlington Dismas House, she opened the Rutland Dismas House in 1990, and, in 2008, the East Allen Dismas House in Winooski, and

Whereas, after a minimum of three months in good standing as a Dismas House resident, an individual can apply to live in one of the organization's Burlington or Rutland satellite apartments for six to twelve months before moving on to independent living, and

Whereas, since Rita McCaffrey opened the Burlington Dismas House in 1986, over 475 men and women have been residents, and many others have lived in Rutland and Winooski, while transitioning with great success into the general community, and

Whereas, her interest in political affairs resulted in her serving as a delegate to the 1988 Democratic National Convention and, in that same year, seeking election to the Vermont Senate from the Rutland Senatorial District, and

Whereas, Rita McCaffrey's electoral effort was successful, and as a senator during the 1989–1990 biennium, she served on the Committee on General Affairs and on the Committee on Health and Welfare, where she applied her expertise in human services as the committee's vice chair, and

Whereas, after a quarter of a century of dynamic leadership, Rita McCaffrey is stepping down as Dismas of Vermont, Inc.'s executive director, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors former Senator Rita Whalen McCaffrey on her career accomplishments at Dismas of Vermont, Inc., *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Rita McCaffrey at Dismas of Vermont, Inc. in Weston.