MR. CONNOLLY: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University on their 30th anniversary and on its continuing success in offering first class educational programming for older adults in Northern Virginia.

In 1991, OLLI was founded as the Learning in Retirement Institute and soon became affiliated with George Mason University. Their mission is “to offer to its members learning opportunities in a stimulating environment in which adults can share their talents, experiences and skills, explore new interests, discover and develop latent abilities, engage in intellectual and cultural pursuits, and socialize with others of similar interests.” What started as a center with 100 members operating and teaching out of a single room has grown into a robust, first class educational and social organization with more than 1,100 members.

OLLI offers adults in Northern Virginia over 600 courses and special events at its three campuses in Fairfax, Reston, and Loudoun. From arts to zoology, religion to science, there is a topic to satisfy everyone. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, OLLI at George Mason converted to online programming, offering an intellectual and social lifeline to those who have been isolated for months as they safely navigated the pandemic. OLLI has played a vital role in enhancing the quality of life of seniors interested in maintaining an active intellectual life.

As someone who comes from local government, I understand firsthand that the high quality of life which we enjoy in Northern Virginia is directly linked to the quality of educational resources we have at our disposal. I believe that education and learning are life-long endeavors and this access should be presented to all regardless of age. OLLI provides this opportunity – to learn for the sake of learning.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University on its 30 years of service to our community.