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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 117

Offered January 22, 2004

Designating March 25, 2004, as Greek Independence Day in Virginia.

Patrons—Rerras; Delegate: Joannou

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people; and

WHEREAS, the ancient Greeks established the Olympic Games, the largest display of athletic skill and competitive spirit in the ancient world; and

WHEREAS, the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896, and in August of 2004, Athens will host the 2004 Olympic Summer Games; and

WHEREAS, the Founding Fathers of the United States drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy; and

WHEREAS, the story of Greek military tactics used at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC is still mandatory reading at the National War College in Washington; and

WHEREAS, Greek soldiers were with the United States Marines on the shores of Tripoli in the military operations memorialized in the United States Marine Hymn; and

WHEREAS, many Americans fought alongside the Greeks in their fight for Greek independence, while stirring speeches by President James Monroe and Daniel Webster led the Congress to send funds and supplies to aid the Greeks in their struggle for freedom; and

WHEREAS, Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821, "It is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you"; and

WHEREAS, Greece has been allied with the United States in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the Balkans; and

WHEREAS, Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through its bravery in the historic Battle of Crete and in Greece, where it presented the Axis with its first major defeat in the land war; and

WHEREAS, Sir Winston Churchill said of the Greeks after this fighting, "Hence we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks"; and

WHEREAS, the author of a military history said, "The campaign in Greece and in Crete forced Hitler to postpone the invasion of Russia . . . and to fight a winter campaign . . . which brought Hitler's war machine to a standstill"; and

WHEREAS, the government of Greece has declared its solidarity with the American people and has pledged to back efforts to combat and eradicate terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States; and

WHEREAS, Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights; and

WHEREAS, those and other ideals have forged a close bond between our two nations and their peoples; and

WHEREAS, March 25, 2004, marks the 183rd anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire; and

WHEREAS, it is proper and desirable to celebrate with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which our two great nations were born; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate March 25, 2004, as Greek Independence Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly urge the citizens of the Commonwealth to observe this day by reflecting on the vital contributions of Greek culture and political thought to the liberty that Virginians today enjoy.

INTRODUCED

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