

2006 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 198

Commending the Virginia Department of State Police for its support of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2006

Agreed to by the Senate, January 26, 2006

WHEREAS, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Mississippi Gulf Coast east of New Orleans, causing unprecedented damage and human suffering in Mississippi, Louisiana, and other Gulf Coast states; and

WHEREAS, as the scope of the destruction became clear in subsequent weeks, calls for assistance were answered by government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels, along with numerous nongovernmental and charitable organizations; and

WHEREAS, among the responders was the Virginia Department of State Police, which over the course of nearly three months sent nine different task forces, consisting of State Police personnel and members of local police departments headed by a State Police officer, to various hard-hit localities in Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, from September 20 to October 7, 2005, Captain Michael Spivey of the Virginia State Police led a task force of 46 officers to Hancock County, Mississippi, including the communities of Bay St. Louis and Waveland, and from October 4 to October 21, 2005, Captain J. Thomas Martin of the Virginia State Police led another task force of 39 officers to the same location; and

WHEREAS, from October 18 to November 4, 2005, Captain Stephen D. Childress of the Virginia State Police led a task force of 40 officers to Hancock County, and from November 1 to November 18, 2005, Captain G. Michael Counts of the Virginia State Police led another task force of 40 officers to the same location; and

WHEREAS, these four groups, largely made up of and led by members of the Virginia Department of State Police, provided basic police services, humanitarian assistance, and preventive patrol to these communities devastated by the effects of Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, from October 10 to October 27, 2005, Lieutenant Craig C. Worsham of the Virginia State Police led a task force of 20 officers to Pearl River County, Mississippi, including the City of Picayune, and from October 24 to November 10, 2005, Lieutenant Tracy S. Russillo of the Virginia State Police led another task force of 20 officers to the same location; and

WHEREAS, from November 7 to November 24, 2005, Lieutenant Jimmy W. Snow of the Virginia State Police led a third task force of 16 officers to Pearl River County, and with the first two groups provided supplemental law-enforcement officers for the City of Picayune, the population of which swelled from 11,000 to 40,000 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, from November 14 to December 1, 2005, Captain Richard A. Denney of the Virginia State Police led a task force of 49 officers to Harrison County, Mississippi, including the communities of Long Beach and Pass Christian, and from November 28 to December 16, 2005, Captain Robert G. Kemmler of the Virginia State Police led another task force of 49 officers to the same location, where both groups supplemented existing police services for the area; and

WHEREAS, in addition, a Virginia State Police helicopter, piloted by First Sergeant Terry Austin and Trooper Andy Anderson was deployed to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to assist with search and rescue and transport of survivors, and a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team, headed by Lieutenant Tim Ring, was sent to Lake Charles, Louisiana, to assist with crisis counseling for public safety officers; and

WHEREAS, the response of the Virginia Department of State Police to the disastrous aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was indicative of the selflessness, dedication, and courage of the members of the Virginia State Police; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the officers and troopers of the Virginia State Police who responded quickly and effectively to the needs of their fellow citizens in Mississippi and Louisiana; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Superintendent, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the response of the Virginia Department of State Police in support of the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

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