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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 73

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 10, 2006

Designating September 17th, in 2006 and in each succeeding year, as Constitution Day in Virginia.

Patrons—Scott, E.T.; Senator: Houck

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States is a living document, America's most precious possession, and continues to guide our country more than two centuries after it was signed by the Framers on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, more than 100 countries around the world have modeled their own constitutions after the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, James Madison, Jr., "The Father of the Constitution" and sponsor of the Bill of Rights, was our fourth president and a great Virginian who was instrumental in the final form of the Constitution and Preamble; and

WHEREAS, the Preamble sets forth the basic tenets of the Constitution—the power to govern belongs to the people, who ordained and established the Constitution for the United States of America in order to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution reflects America's ideals and establishes our system of government with its three branches—the legislative, the executive, and the judicial—each possessing responsibilities that provide checks and balances over the other branches; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution's three principles of separation of powers, federalism, and an independent judiciary have stood the test of time and are paramount to the country's realization of equal justice and liberty for all; and

WHEREAS, during the formal ratification process, several state conventions insisted upon amendments that would prevent the abuse of power by the central government, and some states ratified the Constitution with the understanding that the amendments or "bill of rights" would be offered; and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 1789, at the First Congress of the United States, 12 amendments to the Constitution were proposed to the state legislatures and 10 were accepted; the Bill of Rights, or the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, were ratified on September 15, 1791; and

WHEREAS, in remembrance of the signing of the Constitution and in recognition of the Americans, native-born and naturalized, who strive to uphold the responsibilities of citizenship, the United States Congress, by joint resolution on February 29, 1952, designated September 17th as "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day," and it was proclaimed anew by President Bush on September 17, 2005, in order "to celebrate our Constitution and reaffirm our rights and obligations as citizens of our great Nation"; and

WHEREAS, on each September 17th the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia should recall, celebrate, and reflect upon the words of the Preamble to the Constitution: "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate September 17, in 2006 and in each succeeding year, as Constitution Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of September 17th as Constitution Day in Virginia on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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