

2006 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 12

Reaffirming the Commonwealth's commitment to Constitution Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 10, 2006

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, countries around the world have modeled their own constitutions on the principles of the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, James Madison, Jr., a noble and great Virginian, the "Father of the Constitution," sponsor of the Bill of Rights, Secretary of State, and the fourth president of the United States was the central contributor to the Constitution and Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, James Madison, Jr., was instrumental in the formation of the United States Constitution, including organizing the Constitutional Convention, establishing its scope, and resolving problems that threatened its success, and his most important contribution to the Constitution was the promotion of a Bill of Rights, consisting of the first 10 amendments; and

WHEREAS, his copious and detailed notes of the Constitutional Convention were published in the 1830s and provide the best and most complete record of events, public controversy, and the floor debate relating to the development of the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, a champion of the federal cause, James Madison, Jr., contributed significantly to the creation of the Departments of State, Treasury, and War, and the people of the Commonwealth and this great nation are indebted to him for his vision and our democracy; and

WHEREAS, the Preamble sets forth the basic tenets of the Constitution and provides that the power to create the government belongs to the people, who ordained and established the Constitution of 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, and the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government each possess responsibilities that provide checks and balances over the other branches; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution's 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 ratification process, several state conventions insisted upon amendments that would protect the rights of the people, and some states ratified the Constitution with the understanding that the amendments or "Bill of Rights" would be proposed; and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 1789, during the First Congress of the United States, 12 amendments to the Constitution were proposed to the state legislatures and 10 were ratified by December 15, 1791, as the Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, in remembrance of the signing of the proposed Constitution on September 17, 1787, and in recognition of the Americans who strive to uphold the responsibilities of citizenship, the United States Congress, by joint resolution on February 29, 1952, designated September 17 as Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, and it was proclaimed anew by the President on September 17, 2005, in order "to celebrate our Constitution and reaffirm our rights and obligations as citizens of our great Nation"; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has affirmed the recognition and celebration of Constitution Day pursuant to § 2.2-3315 of the Code of Virginia that states that "the Governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting the seventeenth day of September as Citizenship Day and September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week and recommending that they be observed by the Commonwealth with appropriate exercises . . ."; and

WHEREAS, on each September 17 the citizens of the Commonwealth should recall, celebrate, and reflect upon the words of the Constitution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Commonwealth's commitment to Constitution Day in Virginia be reaffirmed; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post this resolution reaffirming the Commonwealth's commitment to Constitution Day in Virginia on the General Assembly's website.

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