

## 2006 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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### HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 13

Offered February 1, 2006

*Recognizing Czechoslovakian-Americans and their descendants in Virginia.*

Patrons—Ingram and Ebbin

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, one of Virginia's first railroads was constructed in Prince George County in the mid-1800s; steam locomotives required whistle stops along the line, and the first stop built east of Petersburg, near the intersection of Rives and Quaker Roads, was named Wells Station; and

WHEREAS, at a time after the American Civil War when the agricultural economy of the State had drastically declined, a wave of European immigrants, mostly Czech families from the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, settled near Wells Station; and

WHEREAS, by the turn of the 20th century, a schoolhouse, hotel, store, a small railroad depot, and a number of churches had emerged in Wells Station and the number of Czech-Americans swelled into the thousands; and

WHEREAS, an earnest people possessing old world vocations and values, Czech immigrants established prosperous businesses and productive farms; and

WHEREAS, the Czech community has played a vital role in the history of Virginia, particularly in the growth and stability of Prince George County, where the whistle stop at Wells Station was renamed New Bohemia in honor of the industrious people living there; and

WHEREAS, many existing Czech farms, which have been in the same family for well over 100 years are honored as Century Farms of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the oldest Czech Catholic Church in Virginia and perhaps the nation, will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2006; and

WHEREAS, although Czechoslovakian-Americans live throughout the Commonwealth, New Bohemia in Prince George County, the homeplace of Virginia's first Czech families, is in the midst of drastic demographic change and economic development; the whistle stop of Wells Station will soon be the site of a large intermodal facility with truck stops, hotels, and housing developments displacing what used to be Czech farmland; and

WHEREAS, only remnants of the once flourishing New Bohemia exist today, and what remains of the historic community is in danger of being lost in the tide of new development; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Czechoslovakian-Americans and their descendants in Virginia be recognized in order to preserve and honor their contributions as an integral part of the early history and culture of the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to Marie V. Pearson, co-founder, and Joyce Pritchard of the Southside Virginia Czech/Slovak Heritage Society, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

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