

2007 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 659

Designating May 13, in 2007 and in each succeeding year, as Jamestown Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 19, 2007

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2007

WHEREAS, on May 13, 1607, thirteen years before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts, three ships, the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed*, and the *Discovery*, carrying a group of 104 English men and boys arrived at a small peninsula of land along the banks of Virginia's James River to begin the first permanent English colony in America; and

WHEREAS, the new settlers named the river James and the settlement Jamestown in honor of their sovereign King James I, who chartered the Virginia Company of London in 1606 to establish a lucrative and viable colony in America to increase British trade, compete with other European nations in expansion abroad, search for a northwest passage to the Orient, and convert the Indians to the Anglican religion; and

WHEREAS, led by Captain Christopher Newport, the Jamestown Settlement was governed by a council of seven men, with one member to be chosen to serve as president; and

WHEREAS, the Jamestown settlement was built 36 miles inland from the Chesapeake Bay and was thought to be situated in an ideal location providing deep harbor, shelter from attack and easy defense, as well as hidden from the Spanish ships traveling the coast; and

WHEREAS, instead, due to unfavorable conditions and outbreaks of disease, few skilled farmers and an insufficient labor force, and disputes with the Algonquian-speaking Indians that were ruled by the powerful Chief Powhatan, the Jamestown settlers suffered terrible hardships and barely managed to survive; and

WHEREAS, despite overwhelming odds, the colony continued and the dreams, language, customs, government, culture, and beliefs that sprung from these early English settlers, molded by way of their arduous experiences and sacrifices at the Jamestown settlement, were quintessential to the founding of many of America's most cherished ideals, such as freedom of religion, representative government, free speech, cultural diversity, and free enterprise; and

WHEREAS, the 400th anniversary of Jamestown in 2007 is a historic opportunity to permanently designate May 13 as Jamestown Day, commemorating the founding of our nation at the Jamestown settlement on the banks of Virginia's James River; and

WHEREAS, during the anniversary year period, communities and organizations across the Commonwealth will develop unique programs commemorating their heritage, and Historic Jamestowne and Jamestown Settlement will offer all new permanent exhibits, premiere introductory films, and living-history areas portraying the dramatic story of 17th-century Virginia and its Powhatan Indian, English, and western central African cultural origins, drawing on a wealth of historical information that has been revealed by archaeological and documentary research of the past decade; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate May 13, in 2007 and in each succeeding year, as Jamestown Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly encourage Virginians to observe May 13 and the 400th anniversary of Jamestown in 2007 by participating in the numerous new programs and festive activities in communities across the Commonwealth that will increase awareness, knowledge, and enjoyment of the history of the Jamestown settlement in Virginia and its preeminent role in the origin of our nation for many years to come; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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