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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 744

Offered January 11, 2007

*Appreciating and celebrating American values.*

Patron—McEachin

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the year 2007 has particular significance to Virginia, the United States, and the world community on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the landing at Jamestown; and

WHEREAS, the observance of the founding of the first permanent English settlement on these shores 400 years ago commemorates the beginning of the great and wonderful experiment in democracy that has become the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has a long and illustrious history of freedom and democracy, and many of the most significant milestones that make America the bastion of liberty began in the Commonwealth; the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, based primarily on Virginia's Declaration of Rights and appended to the United States Constitution, were penned by two of Virginia's native sons, Thomas Jefferson and George Mason, respectively; and

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence declares that Americans are entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and the Bill of Rights guarantees our basic freedoms, including freedom of religion and freedom of expression; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson issued the first statement in America that articulated the freedom of religion and equality under the law, and that persons should not be discriminated against because of their beliefs; and

WHEREAS, Virginia and the United States have been enriched by contributions of immigrants from all lands, bringing with them their own unique and special cultures, faiths, languages, and ideas; and

WHEREAS, this experiment in democracy—this great "melting pot"—is unique and special and has endured successfully because Americans have inalienable rights that are protected, the liberty to express their ideas, and the freedom to remember and participate in their heritage while remaining loyal and freedom-loving Americans; and

WHEREAS, the diverse heritages, cultures, and faiths of all Americans, especially the citizens of Virginia, are honored and respected in the Commonwealth, and authentic American values among all citizens of the Commonwealth should be encouraged and promoted; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly appreciate and celebrate American values; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly, the oldest continuous legislative body in the United States, welcome persons of all heritages, cultures, and faiths to the Commonwealth, and encourage them to participate fully in the marketplace of ideas and other available opportunities to exercise their constitutional rights and express their beliefs; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post a copy of this resolution on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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