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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 341

Offered February 5, 2008

Commending the State of Israel on the occasion of its 60th anniversary.

Patron—Hull, Abbitt, Albo, Alexander, Amundson, Armstrong, Athey, BaCote, Barlow, Bell, Bouchard, Bowling, Brink, Bulova, Byron, Caputo, Carrico, Cline, Cole, Cosgrove, Cox, Crockett-Stark, Dance, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Englin, Fralin, Frederick, Gear, Gilbert, Griffith, Hall, Hamilton, Hargrove, Hogan, Howell, A.T., Howell, W.J., Hugo, Iaquinto, Ingram, Janis, Joannou, Johnson, Jones, D.C., Jones, S.C., Kilgore, Landes, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Loupassi, Marsden, Marshall, D.W., Marshall, R.G., Massie, Mathieson, May, McClellan, Melvin, Merricks, Miller, J.H., Miller, P.J., Moran, Morgan, Morrissey, Nichols, Nixon, Nutter, O'Bannon, Oder, Orrock, Peace, Phillips, Plum, Pogge, Poindexter, Poisson, Purkey, Putney, Rust, Saxman, Scott, E.T., Scott, J.M., Shannon, Sherwood, Shuler, Sickles, Spruill, Suit, Tata, Toscano, Tyler, Valentine, Vanderhye, Ward, Ware, O., Ware, R.L., Watts and Wright; Senators: Barker, Blevins, Colgan, Cuccinelli, Deeds, Edwards, Hanger, Herring, Houck, Howell, Hurt, Locke, Lucas, Marsh, Martin, McDougale, McEachin, Miller, J.C., Miller, Y.B., Newman, Norment, Northam, Obenshain, Petersen, Puckett, Puller, Quayle, Reynolds, Ruff, Saslaw, Smith, Stolle, Stosch, Stuart, Ticer, Vogel, Wagner, Wampler, Watkins, and Whipple

WHEREAS, 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern Jewish State of Israel, which was officially declared an independent nation on May 14, 1948; and

WHEREAS, Israel plans a series of events to celebrate its diamond jubilee, which began on November 29, 2007, marking the 60th anniversary of the authorization by the United Nations General Assembly of the partition of the British Mandate of Palestine to create the State of Israel; and

WHEREAS, the desire of the Jewish people to establish the modern Jewish State of Israel grew from the existence of the historic Kingdom of Israel, established 3,000 years ago in the city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel; and

WHEREAS, the ties between Virginia and the Jewish people began when Rebecca, Isaacke, and Elias Legardo, along with Joseph Moise, emigrated to Virginia in 1642; and

WHEREAS, Israel has much to commemorate and celebrate, most notably the fact that it has established, in its 60 years of existence, the most successful and politically stable democracy in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, the people of Israel enjoy a dynamic society with a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life; benefit from one of the highest standards of living in the Middle East; and strive for peace with security and dignity for themselves and their neighbors; and

WHEREAS, born in the ashes of the Holocaust, Israel has from its inception faced the hostility, and frequently the armed aggression, of its neighbors, defended itself in six wars, and is the constant target of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, despite difficult and often dangerous circumstances, Israel has been blessed with a succession of great leaders from David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir to Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin; and

WHEREAS, the connection between the Commonwealth and Israel was recognized by Governor Gerald Baliles in 1986, when he created the Virginia-Israel Commission to "commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel" in 1988; and

WHEREAS, by Executive Order 36 in 1994, Governor George Allen created the Virginia-Israel Partnership in the Office of the Governor "recognizing the benefit to the Commonwealth that could accrue from stronger economic and cultural ties to the State of Israel"; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia-Israel Advisory Board, created by an Act of the General Assembly in 1996 and composed of 31 members representing business, education, the arts, government, and the four Jewish Community Federations serving Virginia, advises the Governor on "ways to improve economic and cultural links between the Commonwealth and the State of Israel, with a focus on the areas of commerce and trade, art and education, and general government"; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly approved House Joint Resolution No. 357 in 1998 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel; and

WHEREAS, ties between the Commonwealth and Israel have been strengthened over the past decade as more than 30 Israeli companies have established businesses in Virginia, creating over 1,500 new jobs; and

WHEREAS, sister city relationships have been established between the Greater Washington, Richmond, and Tidewater Jewish Community Federations and the Israeli cities of Beit Shemesh, Emek Hefer, and Pardes Katz, respectively; and

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47 WHEREAS, with the jubilee observance culminating in May 2008, Israel will celebrate its diamond
48 anniversary with events marking the birth and development of the state, the struggle to find peace and
49 security, and its hopes for the future; now, therefore, be it

50 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly
51 commend the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements, reaffirm the bonds of friendship which
52 exist between the Commonwealth and Israel, and congratulate the State of Israel on the occasion of its
53 60th anniversary; and, be it

54 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution
55 for presentation to Israeli Ambassador Sallai Meridor as an expression of the General Assembly of
56 Virginia's continued admiration for Israel's many accomplishments and best wishes for a peaceful and
57 prosperous future.