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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 321

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 13, 2009

*Designating the month of October, in 2009 and in each succeeding year, as Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia.*

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 Patron—Puller
 

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 Referred to Committee on Rules
 

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WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was founded on four principles: inclusion, full participation, economic self-sufficiency, and equality of opportunity for all people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, disabilities affect one-fifth of all Americans, 1 in 10 have a severe disability, and the growth in the number of people with disabilities is expected to accelerate in the coming decades due to the aging of the population; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau also reports that about 9 million people of all ages have disabilities so severe that they require personal assistance to perform everyday activities, and about 80 percent of primary caregivers are relatives, and nearly half of the primary caregivers live with the person with a disability; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Personal Assistance Services estimated in 2005 that "962,000 people in Virginia have a disability, or 14.1 percent of the population age 5 and over," and that "an estimated 172,000 people, or 2.5 percent of the population age 5 and over, have difficulty performing self-care activities commonly referred to as Activities of Daily Living, such as dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home"; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Education's 2006 Child Count reported that Virginia served 172,704 students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that students with disabilities encounter more difficulty being accepted by their peers, making friends, and becoming involved in school and community-based activities and clubs than nondisabled students; and

WHEREAS, to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities into society, it is necessary to increase public awareness, knowledge, and understanding of disabilities, the etiology of disabilities, and the rights of disabled persons; and

WHEREAS, October is recognized as National Disability Employment Awareness Month by the U.S. Department of Labor and as National Disability Awareness Month by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, designating October as Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia will increase public awareness and respect for persons with disabilities, inform the public concerning their many contributions to society, encourage health promotion to increase community awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities, and emphasize the abilities and rights of disabled persons rather than their exceptionalities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate the month of October, in 2009 and in each succeeding year, as Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Governor be requested to encourage the people of the Commonwealth, including public schools, institutions of higher education, the business and corporate community, civic and advocacy organizations, the faith community, and other interested entities, through education and other appropriate activities, programs, and events to promote and highlight Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to Lisbet Ward, Chairwoman of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, requesting that she further disseminate copies of this resolution to the Youth Leadership Forum of Virginia so that their members may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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