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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 210

Offered January 29, 2010

Commending the League of Women Voters of Virginia on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the organization's founding and the historic 100th anniversary of its precursors' participation in the suffragist movement.

Patrons—Herring, Comstock, Abbott, Albo, Alexander, Anderson, Armstrong, Athey, BaCote, Barlow, Bell, Richard P., Brink, Bulova, Carr, Cleaveland, Cline, Cole, Cox, M.K., Crockett-Stark, Dance, Ebbin, Edmunds, Englin, Gear, Greason, Griffith, Hope, Howell, A.T., Hugo, Iaquinto, Ingram, James, Janis, Joannou, Johnson, Jones, Keam, Knight, Kory, Landes, LeMunyon, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Loupassi, Marshall, D.W., Massie, May, McClellan, McQuinn, Merricks, Miller, P.J., Morefield, Morgan, Morrissey, Nixon, Nutter, O'Bannon, Orrock, Plum, Poindexter, Pollard, Purkey, Rust, Scott, E.T., Scott, J.M., Sherwood, Shuler, Sickles, Spruill, Stolle, Surovell, Tata, Torian, Toscano, Tyler, Villanueva, Ward, Ware, O., Watts and Wright

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia is celebrating the 90th anniversary of its founding in 2010; and

WHEREAS, many decades of effort by workers for women's rights were required to obtain passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution giving women the right to vote in 1920; and

WHEREAS, over 160 years ago, on July 19 and 20, 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a leader of the first Woman's Rights Convention, which was attended by over 300 women and men, all suffrage supporters, including influential abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS, inspired by and modeled on the United States Declaration of Independence, Stanton was the principal author of the *Declaration of Sentiments*; among its grievances were the facts that women were not allowed to vote and that even though women had to pay taxes on their property, they had no representation in the decision-making process to levy taxes; and

WHEREAS, the *Declaration of Sentiments* included a resolution for the enfranchisement of women that passed by a narrow vote, only after the famous orator and statesman Frederick Douglass spoke in favor of the measure, arguing that "suffrage is the power to choose rulers and make laws, and the right by which all others are secured"; and

WHEREAS, the National American Woman Suffrage Association advanced the cause of women's rights through the work of civil rights leaders such as Susan B. Anthony; and

WHEREAS, in 1910 the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia was founded to fight for the voting rights of the women of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, another important group that would become the National Woman's Party was established in 1913 by passionate suffragists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, two of numerous women incarcerated in Virginia's Occoquan Workhouse in 1917 for protesting for women's rights; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the tireless efforts of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia, the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the National Woman's Party, and countless other organizations and individuals, both men and women, Congress proposed the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, ratified by the states on August 18, 1920, which provides that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex"; and

WHEREAS, in 1920 the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia became the League of Women Voters of Virginia; its mission, and now 100-year legacy, is to educate all voters and ensure that all citizens are registered to vote; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia has moderated the Women's Legislative Roundtable since 1981; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the historic efforts of the courageous, pioneering women and men of the past and the commitment of the current members of the League of Women Voters of Virginia, more women are running for elected office and participating in the political process, 25 women are members of the Virginia General Assembly, and the women's vote is essential to the success of candidates on the local, state, and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate the League of Women Voters of Virginia on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the organization's founding and the historic 100th anniversary of its founders' participation in the suffragist movement; and, be it

INTRODUCED

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52 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution
53 for presentation to the League of Women Voters of Virginia as an expression of the General Assembly's
54 appreciation of the organization's many accomplishments and its outstanding service to the people of the
55 Commonwealth.