HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

Memorializing Simone Weil.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 10, 2014

WHEREAS, the Nobel laureate in Literature Albert Camus described Simone Weil as "the only great spirit of our times"; and

WHEREAS, the Nobel laureate in Literature T. S. Eliot wrote of Simone Weil that, "We must simply expose ourselves to the personality of a woman of genius, of a kind of genius akin to that of the saints"; and

WHEREAS, scholars of every point on the political spectrum recognize Simone Weil as "perhaps the greatest intellectual and spiritual thinker of the twentieth century"; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil, though French by birth, eschewed the nationalism that twice during her brief lifetime plunged the whole world into war; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil, though an insightful critic of religion in general and of the Christian Church specifically, described herself as "possessed" by Christ and consented, on her deathbed, to baptism and hence to reception into the Church; and

WHEREAS, as author of one of the greatest critiques of both Marxism and capitalism, Simone Weil discerned that, with the advent of machines and the consequences of mass-production and mass-consumption alike, "The contemporary form of true greatness lies in a civilization [that would] be founded on the spirituality of work"; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil, during the depths of the Second World War, declared that social and political renewal could be achieved only by governments that recognized—and served—"the needs of the soul"; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil identified the *rootlessness* that characterizes our time as the greatest peril to the human soul; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil recommended *rootedness* within enduring traditions of countryside, town, and nation as the sole guarantee of authentic life and livelihood; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil identified a balance of principles as necessary to the political wellbeing of a people—such as order *and* liberty, obedience *and* responsibility, equality *and* hierarchism, honor *and* punishment, security *and* risk, private property *and* collective property, and *truth* above all; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil—who died in 1943 at the age of only 34—crowned her political studies, engagement, and affliction by works that moved the Nobel laureate in Literature André Gide (her countryman) to declare her to be "the most truly spiritual writer of this century"; and

WHEREAS, in her writings and in her political engagements alike Simone Weil discerned "the love of God in affliction" to be among the most fundamental realities of the human pilgrimage; and

WHEREAS, Simone Weil identified a purity of *attention* to be the principal means by which human beings can enter into authentic communion with both God and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, in her *Last Notebooks* Simone Weil wrote of this conviction, "There is no entry into the transcendent until the human faculties—intelligence, will, human love—have come up against a limit, and the human being waits at this threshold, which he can make no move to cross, without turning away and without knowing what he wants, in fixed, unwavering attention"; and

WHEREAS, among the works of Simone Weil that will reward readers until the end of time are *Science, Necessity, and the Love of God*; *Oppression and Liberty*; *Waiting on God*; and *The Need for Roots*; and

WHEREAS, The American Weil Society facilitates meditation on the life, writings, and legacy of Simone Weil for readers throughout North America; and

WHEREAS, one of the leading students of Simone Weil in North America is Lawrence E. Schmidt, professor emeritus at the Center for the Study of Religion in the University of Toronto; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the members of the body commemorate the recent centennial of the birth of Simone Weil; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Professor Lawrence E. Schmidt upon the occasion of his visit to Richmond to offer his reflections for "An Evening of Simone Weil."