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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 674

Offered January 16, 2015

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

Patrons—Keam; Senator: Ebbin

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removed longstanding restrictions on immigration in the United States, opening up opportunities for both existing residents and a new generation of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, by 1917, the United States had instituted numerous limitations on immigration, including measures that effectively banned immigration by individuals of Asian descent; an economic downturn after World War I led to deepening anti-immigrant sentiment; and

WHEREAS, in 1921, the United States also imposed quotas or numerical limits on most immigration; the limits—called the National Origins Formula—were derived using the percentages of the population from the 1890 census and heavily favored immigrants from northern and western European countries; and

WHEREAS, after the Great Depression and World War II reduced immigration, many Americans believed that the era of immigration to the United States had ended; however, between 1946 and 1950, many immigration quotas were repealed or adjusted to accommodate refugees from war-torn nations; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 abolished racial, ethnic, and gender barriers to immigration, but left the quota system unchanged; the act also gave future presidents discretionary power to admit any number of immigrants in a time of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 officially abolished the National Origins Formula and substituted annual hemispheric caps of 170,000 people from the Eastern Hemisphere and 120,000 from the Western Hemisphere, with no more than 20,000 from one nation; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 also included provisions for immigrants to enter the country outside of the numerical limits, such as the ability for family members of recent immigrants to enter the country; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 is now considered one of the most important statutes of the 20th century, along with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Social Security Amendments of 1965; and

WHEREAS, increased immigration as a result of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 created new opportunities in American communities, enhanced the cultural landscape of the nation, and augmented the United States' capacity for global leadership; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the importance of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the benefits of which are still seen in 2015.

INTRODUCED

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