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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 709

Offered January 23, 2015

Designating May 1, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Law Day in Virginia.

Patrons—Lopez, Kory, Anderson, BaCote, Bulova, Carr, Filler-Corn, Herring, Hope, James, Joannou, Keam, Mason, McClellan, Murphy, Plum, Preston, Rasoul, Sickles, Simon, Spruill, Sullivan, Surovell, Toscano, Tyler, Ward and Watts; Senators: Petersen and Saslaw

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, by proclamation, declared May 1, 1958, as the first Law Day, stating that "it is fitting that the people of this Nation should remember with pride and vigilantly guard the great heritage of liberty, justice and equality under law which our forefathers bequeathed to us"; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, the United States Congress, by joint resolution, designated May 1 as the official date for celebrating Law Day in the United States; and

WHEREAS, President John F. Kennedy in 1961 stated that "the objectives of Law Day, USA, are to urge Americans to rededicate themselves to the ideals of equality and justice under law in their relations with each other and with other nations; to cultivate that respect for law which is vital in a democratic society; and to foster a full understanding and appreciation of our liberties and of the legal and judicial institutions which protect them"; and

WHEREAS, President Kennedy urged "that public bodies, educational institutions, the legal profession, civic and service organizations, and the media of information take the lead in sponsoring and participating in educational undertakings and other appropriate means to give effect to the objectives of this national observance"; and

WHEREAS, every United States President since 1958 and many governors and state legislatures have issued annual Law Day proclamations supporting a common theme; and

WHEREAS, the Law Day 2015 theme is "Magna Carta: Symbol of Freedom Under Law," marking the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta, an international symbol of the rule of law and a foundation of many of the rights and freedoms Americans hold dear; and

WHEREAS, Law Day programs should promote the rule of law through specific civic activities throughout the Commonwealth, including special events for K-12 students and other education and outreach programs in schools and communities; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Law Foundation and Virginia Bar Association sponsor "The Rule of Law Project," which teaches children the relevance and benefits of the rule of law in the United States and throughout the world; the Robert H. Smith Center for the Constitution at James Madison's Montpelier sponsors "We the People - The Citizen and the Constitution" for middle and high school students; and Fairfax County Public Schools includes Law Day on its calendar of noteworthy events; and

WHEREAS, in celebration of the importance of Law Day, citizens of the Commonwealth and the United States are encouraged to recommit themselves to the rule of law and to uphold the fundamental principles enshrined in the nation's founding documents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate May 1, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Law Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the American Bar Association, the Virginia State Bar, Virginia Bar Association, and the Virginia School Boards Association so that members of these organizations 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 House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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