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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 197

Offered January 21, 2016

*Designating April 16, in 2016 and in each succeeding year, as Chagas Disease Awareness Day in Virginia.*

Patrons—Lopez, Kory and Rasoul; Senators: Ebbin and Howell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Chagas Disease, a parasitic infection that is typically transmitted by insects but can be congenital, can persist in the body for decades and lead to serious heart problems, such as heart failure, stroke, and heart rhythm disturbances later in life; and

WHEREAS, also known as the kissing bug disease, Chagas Disease affects eight to 10 million people worldwide, many of whom are in Latin America, and is the third most prevalent parasitic infection in the world; one in every three people who contract the disease develop a lethal heart condition, killing more than 12,000 people each year; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that up to 70 percent of the population in some provinces of Bolivia have Chagas Disease, and the populations of El Salvador and other Central American countries also show high rates of infection; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is home to more Bolivian immigrants than the number living in New York and California combined, and the Washington Metropolitan area is home to the largest per capita population of El Salvadorian immigrants in the country; at least 300,000 people in the United States have Chagas Disease; and

WHEREAS, the Latin American population in the Commonwealth and the United States is at high risk for Chagas Disease; according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the first documented case of congenital Chagas Disease occurred in Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, immigrants afflicted with Chagas Disease in the United States, many of whom do not speak English and lack insurance, face numerous obstacles to treatment; doctors in the United States are often unaware of how to screen for and treat the disease and testing is both costly and inconsistent; and

WHEREAS, doctors may be unfamiliar with the anti-parasitic medication used to treat Chagas Disease, which may cause side effects and is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, requiring patients to go through a lengthy consent process; more funding and research are required to determine the effectiveness of treatments for Chagas Disease in adults; and

WHEREAS, many doctors are unaware that Chagas Disease can be found in the United States; the economic toll of Chagas Disease is estimated at \$7 billion annually, with more than 10 percent of that cost incurred in the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, Virginians are encouraged to learn more about Chagas Disease and how it can affect individuals and families in the Commonwealth and to support developments in testing and treatment toward the discovery of a cure; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate April 16, in 2016 and in each succeeding year, as Chagas Disease Awareness Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Chagas Disease Foundation so that members of the organization 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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