

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1068

Commemorating the teaching of the historical 1606 First Virginia Charter.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2017

Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2017

WHEREAS, 2016 marked the 410th anniversary of the issuance of the 1606 First Virginia Charter, sometimes called "the birth certificate of America," which created the Virginia Company and authorized the colonization of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the upcoming 400th anniversary of the historic 1619 First Virginia General Assembly will focus a world spotlight on the dawn of American civilization in the early 17th century, including the 1606 First Virginia Charter and its subsequent enlargements in 1609 and 1612 which, in 1616 produced America's first private property owners legally designated as "Ancient Planters of Virginia"; and

WHEREAS, the seminal year of 1619 featured the meeting of America's first representative legislative assembly, the creation of its first educational system, the arrival of African indentured servants, the arrival of women recruited by the Virginia Company as marriageable wives for the original settlers, the arrival of orphaned children to contribute to the permanent settlement, and the first Thanksgiving celebration at the Berkeley Plantation, any of which could easily merit individual attention; and

WHEREAS, the historic 1765 Virginia Tax Stamp Resolves passed in response to Parliament's Stamp Act of 1765 cited the 1606 and 1609 Virginia Charters to demonstrate that the American colonies always had the authority to determine their own taxation policies; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, *The Jamestown 350th anniversary historical booklets*, a boxed set of 23 booklets edited by The College of William and Mary's Dr. Earl Gregg Swem, was published to provide a history of the Commonwealth, with booklet four titled *The Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London, with Seven Related Documents*; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, the Virginia State Bar dedicated a marble plaque in the Jamestown Brick Church, that states "since Magna Carta the Common Law has been the cornerstone of individual liberties, even as against the Crown," highlighting the signal importance of the 1606 First Virginia Charter as the historical link with the 1789 United States Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, since 1995, all Virginia public schools have been required to ensure that the 1606, 1609, and 1612 Virginia Charters are included in curricula and on testing materials to ensure that students become aware of "the citizenship responsibilities inherent in the rights included in these documents" and better understand the heritage of the freedoms they now enjoy; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Virginia General Assembly commended the 400th anniversary celebration of the 1606 First Virginia Charter, which was commemorated with events on the James River's Dutch Gap bluff at the Henricus Historical Park coordinated by Henricus Colledge (1619)® ; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, South Carolina congratulated Virginia on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the 1606 First Virginia Charter and, in 2015, commemorated the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, citing the importance of the separation of powers, checks and balances, and due process of law; and

WHEREAS, all Virginia educational organizations, public, private, parochial, and home education, including teacher training programs, are encouraged to include in their teaching activities the letter and spirit of the 1606 First Virginia Charter, its companions from 1609 and 1612 and the other great documents of early American history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the teaching of the 1606 First Virginia Charter; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Steven C. Smith, chancellor of Henricus Colledge (1619)® as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the historical importance of the 1606 First Virginia Charter.

ENROLLED

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