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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 796

Offered January 20, 2017

Commending Mr. Peanut.

Patrons—Jones; Senator: Cosgrove

WHEREAS, Mr. Peanut, designed by Antonio Gentile as the mascot for Planters, was created in 1916 and remains a cherished facet of Americana with unique roots in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in 1913, Planters opened a facility in Suffolk to be closer to the peanut farmers in the area, and in 1916, the company's founder, Amedeo Obici, hosted a contest for schoolchildren to submit drawings for a company mascot; and

WHEREAS, Antonio Gentile, a child of Italian immigrants, submitted 11 drawings of a peanut with arms, legs, and a face doing various activities, such as serving peanuts, singing, riding a horse, and walking with a cane; and

WHEREAS, Antonio Gentile's winning submission was modified by an artist who added other iconic details, such as Mr. Peanut's top hat and monocle, and the design was an instant hit in nationwide advertising campaigns; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Peanut has remained the instantly recognizable mascot of Planters for 100 years, and the original drawings reside in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Mr. Peanut still calls Suffolk home, and Planters is an important part of the Suffolk community, contributing to the economic vitality of the city and its status in the peanut industry; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the creation of Mr. Peanut in 2016, the Suffolk Public Library and the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society hosted a series of talks on the subject, and a historical marker was placed near the site of Antonio Gentile's home in Hall Place Park; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Mr. Peanut, a well-known symbol of the importance of the peanut industry to the Commonwealth and the United States for 100 years; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the family of Antonio Gentile and Planters as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the importance of this cultural icon.

INTRODUCED

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