

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 806

Commending the American Legion Virginia Boys State.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 27, 2017

Agreed to by the Senate, February 2, 2017

WHEREAS, the American Legion Virginia Boys State is celebrating its 75th year of developing high school boys across the Commonwealth into civic leaders, teaching them about how government works and the importance of good citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the first Boys State was held in June 1935 in Illinois, and the youth movement that became Boys State was developed and sponsored by the American Legion to counteract efforts by the Nazi Freedom Foundation to promote a fascist form of government; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Boys State was organized in 1939 as the Old Dominion Boys State, sponsored by the American Legion Department of Virginia in cooperation with Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and the program will hold its 75th session in June 2017, on the campus of Radford University; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Boys State is a nonpartisan program that seeks to develop civic leadership and pride in American citizenship and to instill in the attendees a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, high school juniors are selected as delegates to attend Virginia Boys State by local American Legion Posts and, in most cases, the attendees' expenses for the week-long program are paid by a sponsoring American Legion Post, local business, or community-based organization; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Boys State is a learning experience in practical democracy, developed on the assumption that youth learn best by doing, and attendees are provided a firsthand education in the law and court system, parliamentary procedure, and Virginia political history; and

WHEREAS, at Virginia Boys State, the citizens of a mythical 51st state are organized into two political parties (Federalist and Nationalist), for which the students adopt party platforms, and then delegates are elected to serve in offices at each level of government: local, county, and state; and

WHEREAS, speakers from all levels of government provide valuable lessons for the delegates who attend Virginia Boys State, and the attendees are fortunate to receive guidance and leadership from a highly qualified and dedicated staff who work hard to provide a special and unique learning experience each summer; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Boys State is a leadership action program, designed to give attendees a working knowledge of government and to impress upon them the importance of being a good citizen; by the end of the week many participants realize how great it is to be an American; and

WHEREAS, while much has changed in the world political climate from the time the program was founded, the American Legion continues to sponsor Virginia Boys State in the belief that young citizens who are familiar with the operation of our government will be better prepared to uphold its ideals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the American Legion Virginia Boys State on 75 years of developing high school boys into civic leaders and teaching them about the importance of government and democracy; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Gerald Rhoads, director of the American Legion Virginia Boys State, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the program's storied 75-year history of educating generations of good citizens and future leaders across the Commonwealth.

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