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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 810

Offered January 20, 2017

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's "tear down this wall" speech.

Patrons—Miyares, Poindexter and Rasoul

WHEREAS, on June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan spoke in West Berlin, Germany, and implored the Soviet Union to tear down the wall that had divided West Berlin and Soviet-controlled East Berlin since 1961; and

WHEREAS, for the residents of the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany, and East Berlin, the Berlin Wall represented a growing sense of hopelessness and oppression, and President Reagan addressed the issue multiple times throughout his presidency; and

WHEREAS, President Reagan gave the famous speech at the Brandenburg Gate in the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany, with West German President Richard Von Weizsäcker, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and West Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen in attendance; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that most West Berliners opposed the Berlin Wall, President Reagan directly challenged Mikhail Gorbachev, the head of the Soviet Union, in the interests of freedom and prosperity, to "tear down this wall," in opposition to many of his own advisers, who suggested that the phrase may cause undue tensions with the Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, President Reagan's "tear down this wall" speech was a clear indication that the United States stood with the people of both East Germany and West Germany against the tyranny of the Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, after waves of East German refugees escaped through Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria in 1989, East Germany began to open its borders with West Germany, and the demolition of the Berlin Wall began in November 1989, marking the first steps toward German reunification; and

WHEREAS, President Reagan's "tear down this wall" speech is an enduring reminder of the power of bold ideas and clear leadership and the importance of standing stalwart for the causes of freedom and liberty in the pursuit of peace; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the 30th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's "tear down this wall" speech; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the speech's historic significance.

INTRODUCED

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