

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 444

Commending the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 7, 2018

Agreed to by the Senate, March 9, 2018

WHEREAS, the arts enrich the natural character, individual spirit, and quality of life of the citizens of the Commonwealth and have become an integral part of Virginia's education, history, culture, and economy; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Virginia Commission for the Arts is celebrating 50 years of supporting arts and culture for all Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's educational priorities demand a well-rounded education for every Virginian child, including access to arts learning as well as arts and cultural experiences; and

WHEREAS, nonprofit arts organizations represent an important asset in the Commonwealth's economic development; in 2017, Virginia was home to more than 17,000 arts-related businesses that employed more than 68,500 people and bolstered the Commonwealth's tourism and travel industries; and

WHEREAS, public investment in the arts at the state level sends a strong message to the private sector and creates leverage for arts organizations to obtain federal and local government funding and significant private support; and

WHEREAS, through its grant process, the Virginia Commission for the Arts provides essential operating support for nonprofit arts organizations and educational activities that reached 1.6 million Virginia children last year, and enabled more than 5.8 million people to attend over 38,000 arts events made possible through funding provided by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1980s, Virginia leaders in government, business, and the arts embraced a public funding goal of one dollar per capita to be allocated for support of the Virginia Commission for the Arts; and

WHEREAS, by the 1989 - 1990 fiscal year, state and federal funding of the Virginia Commission for the Arts had exceeded \$5.5 million and Virginia was within a few hundred thousand dollars of reaching the dollar-per-capita goal; and

WHEREAS, the Commission Studying Creative Solutions for Funding for the Arts in the Commonwealth determined that appropriating one dollar per capita for the Virginia Commission for the Arts is a realistic goal that will confirm the Commonwealth's long-term commitment to supporting the arts while providing a funding incentive for private contributors; and

WHEREAS, over the last two decades, the impact of economic recessions coupled with changes in the spending priorities of successive administrations has resulted in substantial and disproportionate cuts to the Virginia Commission for the Arts that plummeted Virginia's support to 30 cents per person; and

WHEREAS, even though some of the funding for the Virginia Commission for the Arts has been restored in some years through increases proposed by the General Assembly, Virginia still ranks 10th from the bottom of all states in its support of the arts; and

WHEREAS, the national average among states is now more than one dollar per capita, while Virginia provides just 43 cents per person; the Commonwealth is committed to meeting its goal to appropriate one dollar per capita for the support of the Virginia Commission for the Arts as resources permit in the coming years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia Commission for the Arts on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the president of Virginians for the Arts as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the vital importance of state support for the arts.

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