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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 397

Offered February 21, 2019

Commending Virginia Indians.

Patrons—Peace, Hodges, Krizek, Adams, D.M., Aird, Bagby, Bell, John J., Bourne, Bulova, Carr, Cole, Collins, Convirs-Fowler, Delaney, Filler-Corn, Fowler, Freitas, Gooditis, Guzman, Hayes, Herring, Hope, Ingram, Jones, J.C., Jones, S.C., Keam, Knight, Kory, Landes, LaRock, Levine, Lindsey, Lopez, McQuinn, Murphy, Plum, Pogge, Poindexter, Ransone, Rasoul, Reid, Robinson, Roem, Rush, Samirah, Sickles, Simon, Stolle, Thomas, Torian, Tran, Turpin, Tyler, VanValkenburg, Ward, Ware, Watts, Webert and Wilt

WHEREAS, beginning thousands of years before recorded history and European contact, indigenous peoples have populated the North and South American continents, including the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Indians are an integral part of Virginia and American history, including ensuring the survival of the first Europeans who arrived in North America during the 16th and 17th centuries; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Indians specifically contributed to the survival of the colonists during the 1610 "starving times," including by offering corn in exchange for copper and tools, as recorded by Captain John Smith; and

WHEREAS, for many years, the rich inventiveness of Virginia Indians was not acknowledged or celebrated; however, archeological evidence indicates that many contributions to modern society were either first invented or used by Virginia Indians; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Indian contributions to the humanities include oral literary and cultural traditions, art, sculpture, beadwork, pottery, music, poetry, literature, and well-known words that still exist today and have been adopted into the English language, such as moccasin, raccoon, and opossum; and

WHEREAS, "America's first peoples have endured and remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence, and have contributed certain values and ideas that have become ingrained in the American spirit: the knowledge that humans can thrive and prosper without destroying the natural environment; the understanding that people from very different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and traditions can come together to build a great country; and the awareness that diversity can be a source of strength rather than division," the President of the United States stated on the occasion of National American Indian Heritage Month in 1996; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Virginia Indian Commemorative Commission, in the presence of Governor Ralph S. Northam and Chiefs of the various state-recognized tribes dedicated "Mantle," a permanent monument installed on the Virginia State Capitol Square as a lasting tribute to all Virginia Indians; and

WHEREAS, today, the Commonwealth recognizes 11 tribes and two reservations—the Pamunkey Indian Tribe and the Mattaponi Indian Tribe in King William County—which date back to the 1600s, and approximately 15,000 people of indigenous ancestry; and

WHEREAS, today in Virginia, seven tribes are federally recognized and have this sovereignty affirmed by the government of the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting, with the advent of the commemoration of the American Revolution, Virginia to America 1619 - 2019, that the Commonwealth acknowledge and recognize the significant achievements and contributions of Virginia Indians in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Virginia Indians hereby be commended on their many contributions to the Commonwealth and American life; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, as the Governor's liaison to the Virginia Indian tribes, and to the 11 state-recognized tribes as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for Virginia Indian history, heritage, and contributions to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States.

INTRODUCED

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