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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 263

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled December 5, 2018

Commending the American Legion.

Patrons—Cosgrove, Edwards, Petersen, Barker, Dance, DeSteph, McPike, Peake, Spruill and Suetterlein

WHEREAS, for 100 years, the American Legion has promoted patriotism and advocated for military veterans, their families, and their communities throughout the Commonwealth and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion was founded in Paris, France, by veterans of World War I, who were concerned about maintaining the welfare of their comrades and communities after their return to the United States; the organization was officially chartered by the United States Congress on September 16, 1919; and

WHEREAS, based in Indianapolis, the American Legion has grown to become the largest wartime veterans service organization in the country, with more than 12,000 posts in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, the Philippines, and France; and

WHEREAS, in its early years, the American Legion helped create the United States Flag Code, which established the proper protocols of use, display, and respect for the flag, and the organization was instrumental in the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, now the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, the American Legion advocated for improved support for medically discharged disabled veterans, which became known as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 or the G.I. Bill; the bill provided a wide range of benefits for all returning veterans, including access to higher education; and

WHEREAS, members of the American Legion have strengthened their communities through volunteer outreach, civics programs, and fundraising for charitable organizations; after Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the American Legion established the National Emergency Fund to provide immediate cash relief for veterans who have been affected by natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion's 100th anniversary celebration began at the 100th American Legion National Convention on August 24 - 30, 2018, in Minneapolis, the site of the first such convention in 1919, will continue through the 101st American Legion National Convention in August 2019, and will conclude on Veterans Day on November 12, 2019; and

WHEREAS, among many special events during this 15-month commemoration, the American Legion developed a video series and an illustrated book on the history of the organization, organized exhibits at national museums, and hosted several American Legion Legacy Run motorcycle rides; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion also launched a Post History Page on its website, allowing individual posts throughout the nation to build a unique page detailing that post's history and contributions to its community; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion's centennial provides an opportunity not only to look back upon the organization's storied history, but also to foster a new era of growth and engagement in the important programs that have served generations of veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the American Legion for its legacy of service to veterans on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the American Legion as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's contributions to American society, national security, and the welfare of military veterans and their families.

INTRODUCED

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