

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 91

Commending Hanover County.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 24, 2019

WHEREAS, in 2020, Hanover County will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of its founding and its unique role in events that have shaped the history of the Commonwealth and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County was formed on November 26, 1720, from New Kent County along the boundaries of St. Paul's Parish; and

WHEREAS, the original Hanover County Courthouse, believed to have been constructed between 1737 and 1743, is the second oldest courthouse in the Commonwealth still in use and appears as the most prominent feature on the seal of the County, along with references to Patrick Henry and Henry Clay, both of whom were natives of the County; and

WHEREAS, in 1743, the first Virginia Presbytery was formed at the Polegreen Meetinghouse and was soon led by the Reverend Samuel Davies, Virginia's first licensed non-Anglican pastor and an oratorical inspiration to a then-young parishioner named Patrick Henry; and

WHEREAS, the Polegreen Meetinghouse, which was representative of a Protestant religious revival known as the "Great Awakening," when Virginians sought freedom of religious expression, served as a treasured place in the community until its destruction during the Civil War; a memorial to the Historic Polegreen Church was created after the foundation of the original meetinghouse was uncovered in the early 1990s; and

WHEREAS, Patrick Henry, one of the most important Revolutionary War patriots, publicly challenged the King of England's authority in the "Parson's Cause" case, heard in the historic Hanover Courthouse in 1763, an argument that has been called "the opening bell of the American Revolution"; and

WHEREAS, in 1766, Patrick Henry authored *The Virginia Resolves*, which protested the Stamp Act passed by the British Parliament and led other colonies to protest in similar manners, ultimately sparking the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, in the Second Virginia Convention of 1775, Patrick Henry, who is known to history as the "Voice of the Revolution," exhorted his fellow representatives to pass a resolution preparing Virginia troops for the Revolutionary War with one of America's most famous speeches, ending with "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"; and

WHEREAS, Patrick Henry served as Virginia's first elected governor, a post to which he was reelected four times; and

WHEREAS, sites associated with the life of Patrick Henry in Hanover County were among the first in the Commonwealth's Road to Revolution Heritage Trail, with historical markers erected at Scotchtown, which was built in the early 1700s and was his home from 1771 to 1778; Hanover Courthouse; Rural Plains, which was owned by the parents of his first wife and is now part of a Civil War battlefield preserved by Richmond National Battlefield Park; his birthplace at Studley; and at Pine Slash, his first home with his first wife; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County is also the home of the historic Hanover Tavern, the original structure of which dates to about 1732; and

WHEREAS, Hanover is proud to be the home of several churches that were founded in the 18th century including Slash Church, which was built around 1730 and is the oldest frame church in continuous use in Virginia; Fork Church, which was built around 1735; Winn's Baptist Church, established in 1776; and Black Creek Baptist Church, founded in 1777; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County is also the birthplace of Henry Clay, one of America's great political leaders of the first half of the 19th century, who served nearly 50 years in Congress and was known as the "Great Compromiser" for his efforts to preserve the Union in the years before the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County's primary industry has always been agriculture, beginning with tobacco and over the centuries shifting to grain crops, primarily wheat and corn, and vegetables; the County was also the home of one of the greatest agricultural scientists of the 19th century, Edmund Ruffin, who discovered that the acidity of soils could be neutralized by applying marl; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County is home to 39 sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register, including Sycamore Tavern, Hickory Hill, and Marlbourne; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County was the site of numerous battles in the Civil War, including the site of General Robert E. Lee's first (Gaines Mill) and last (Cold Harbor) major battlefield victories, with Gaines Mill, Cold Harbor, Beaver Dam Creek and Rural Plains at Totopotomoy Creek preserved as part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, and North Anna and Cold Harbor preserved by the County;

and

WHEREAS, Hanover County is home to the incorporated Town of Ashland, which was chartered in 1858 and named after Henry Clay's estate in Kentucky, and which is now home to more than 7,000 residents who enjoy its charming ambiance as both a railroad town and college town; and

WHEREAS, Randolph-Macon College, America's oldest Methodist-related college, moved to Ashland from Boydton in 1868 and now has an enrollment of more than 1,400 students on a beautiful 116-acre campus that has more than 60 buildings; and

WHEREAS, the construction of I-95 in the 1960s and I-295 in the 1980s helped bring additional prosperity to Hanover County; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County currently has the third largest population of the Metro Richmond suburban counties, with an estimated population of 110,000 in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County was one of the smallest local governments in the nation to achieve Triple-A ratings from each of the bond rating agencies; and

WHEREAS, Hanover County has been successful in attracting high-quality residential and business growth to its suburban services area while maintaining its rural charm and preserving its historic resources; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Hanover County are proud of their rich history and their prosperous present and look forward to a promising future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Hanover County hereby be commended on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of its founding; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the chair of the Hanover County Board of Supervisors as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the County's illustrious history and significant contributions to the Commonwealth.