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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 408

Offered January 21, 1999

Establishing a goal for the General Assembly to appropriate one dollar per capita for the support of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy by the year 2003.

Patron—Holland

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Humanities enrich the lives of all Virginians by providing opportunities for learning, creativity, and self-expression; and

WHEREAS, the Humanities are active and public, not remote and academic, and are therefore an integral, valuable, and dynamic part of our everyday lives; and

WHEREAS, the Humanities contribute to the interpretation and understanding of historical and culture traditions as well as to the understanding of current policy debates; and

WHEREAS, federal support for the Humanities from the National Endowment for the Humanities has been adversely affected by increasing demands for other services and programs; and

WHEREAS, public investment in the Humanities sends a strong message to the private sector and creates leverage for humanities organizations to obtain additional private support; and

WHEREAS, continuing economic challenges have prompted the Humanities to develop new strategies for funding, such as increasing private fund-raising and earned income; and

WHEREAS, Humanities organizations in Virginia must compete not only with state institutions for appropriations, but also with the pressing demands that education, social services, public safety, transportation, and other programs place on the Commonwealth's budget; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy (VFH) has taken a leading role in anticipating, developing, and supporting new public programs on contemporary issues and has boldly explored topics on the meaning of community, in both rural and urban areas; the untold stories of Virginia's history and people; the quest for individual rights and personal responsibilities; the issue of violence; and the increasingly important roles of science and technology in our society, among many others; and

WHEREAS, the VFH supports public education for children by sponsoring 125 summer seminars and related programs for K-12 teachers over the last 15 years; providing educational films, videos, audiotapes and traveling exhibits to over 500 schools, libraries, museums, and community groups; and promoting life-long reading through the Motherhead/Fatheread family literacy program and the Virginia Festival of the Book, which annually attracts over 15,000 participants from 20 states; and

WHEREAS, the VFH has sponsored 40,000 adult educational programs during the last 20 years, all of which have been free and open to the public and offered in virtually every city and county in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, VFH's adult educational programs currently reach a stateside audience of over 750,000 annually and a national media audience in the millions and bring in prominent scholars, writers and film makers to enrich the Commonwealth's culture with such international programs as the Irish Film Festival and VABook!; and

WHEREAS, the VFH fosters economic development through its support of museums, historical sites, and humanities programs which generate more than \$7.6 billion annually from tourists and return more than \$400 million to the state and localities in tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, the VFH multiplies the Commonwealth's investment in the humanities, having raised more than \$22 million in out-of-state support for Virginia public education programs and works collaboratively with other not-for-profit organizations such as the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Association of Museums and the Jamestown Yorktown 2007 Celebration; and

WHEREAS, the VFH promotes civic participation and responsibility by providing opportunities for citizens to become more informed and to explore and debate important current issues through major programs on the foundations of democracy — the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom and sponsoring public forums on issues such as school violence, America in the 21st Century, the role of government, and the importance of community; and

WHEREAS, the VFH has been a pillar of support to rural and urban communities by assisting them in exploring their history and future; creating a network of regional councils in Appalachian, Piedmont, Chesapeake, and Northern Virginia regions to strengthen humanities programming in underserved areas; and establishing a grant program to study "The Future of Rural Virginia;" and

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60 WHEREAS, the VFH connects the traditions of the past with issues of today by documenting and
61 preserving Virginia's rich traditions and heritage in preparation for 2007, the 400th anniversary of
62 Virginia; incorporating a statewide folklife program to document, interpret, and present programs on
63 communities; developing a Media Center to explore the meaning of film in culture; and offering
64 state-of-the-art equipment to assist Virginia's filmmakers to produce documentary and other
65 humanities-related films; and

66 WHEREAS, public investment by the Commonwealth in the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities
67 and Public Policy currently stands at only 10 cents per capita; now, therefore, be it

68 RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly establish
69 a goal to appropriate one dollar per capita for the support of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities
70 and Public Policy by the year 2003; and, be it

71 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the chair
72 of the board of directors of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy in order that
73 she may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.