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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 296

Offered March 6, 2006

Commending Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., Chief of Police, and the Virginia Capitol Police.

Patrons—Marsh, Blevins, Cuccinelli, Edwards, Howell, Lambert, Lucas, Obenshain, Puller, Quayle, Rerras, Reynolds, Saslaw and Stolle

WHEREAS, the Virginia Capitol Police, recognized as the first organized policing agency in the nation, originated at the first permanent English settlement in Jamestown; and

WHEREAS, in 1618, the Guard, consisting of 10 men, was formed to protect the Governor from the hostile Indian population, and was expanded in 1663 to protect the Governor, the Council, and the Colonial Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Guard remained an integral part of the executive and legislative processes when the Capitol was moved to Williamsburg in 1699 and subsequently when the Capitol was relocated in 1780 to its present home in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the Public Guard was established by the General Assembly in 1801 to protect public property in Richmond; however, in 1869, this moniker evolved into the Virginia Capitol Police, as it is presently known; and

WHEREAS, today, the Virginia Capitol Police is a multifaceted agency with varied responsibilities, including the maintenance and 24-hour security of the buildings and grounds of the Capitol and other designated state office buildings and properties in the Richmond area, the investigation of crimes occurring on these sites, patrolling and manning these properties and state-owned parking lots, enforcing traffic and criminal laws, answering complaints, responding to alarms, promoting community relations and crime prevention, and providing nontraditional police services to state agencies, state employees, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Capitol Police also provides numerous services to executive branch and judicial branch agencies in Richmond; keep the public peace during rallies, demonstrations, civil disturbances, and riots; have concurrent jurisdiction with law-enforcement officers in Richmond and contiguous counties in cases involving the theft or misappropriation of the personal property of any member or employee of the General Assembly; and provide security in accompanying the Governor, members of the Governor's family, the Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Supreme Court Justices, and members of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, since its creation, the men and women of the Virginia Capitol Police have served with honor, pride, and distinction under the leadership of extraordinary chiefs of police who led the force during safe and perilous times throughout its illustrious and proud history; and

WHEREAS, the men and women of the Virginia Capitol Police currently serve the people of the Commonwealth under the leadership of Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., a native of Richmond, who joined the force in 1974; and

WHEREAS, coming up through the ranks, Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., has served as Patrol Officer, Investigator, Supervisor, Training Officer and Operations Commander, and was appointed Chief of Police on May 21, 1999; and

WHEREAS, Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., as chief, led the Virginia Capitol Police in the face of the added security challenges imposed by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, immediately following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Virginia Capitol Police put into action a plan that provided measured and reasonable protection for the Commonwealth's seat of government; and

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2001, the Virginia Capitol Police established the first multiagency intelligence briefing on the September 11 terrorist attacks, which was attended by more than 15 criminal justice agencies, and produced a guide for handling suspicious packages which was so successful that it was adopted by the United States Army Criminal Investigation Command; and

WHEREAS, the renovation of the State Capitol has necessitated certain additional requirements to enhance security and protect the members of the General Assembly, its staff, and the public who frequent the Patrick Henry Building, the General Assembly Building, the Library of Virginia, and several parking areas, and the Virginia Capitol Police has responded to this added responsibility with outstanding service, thoughtfulness, and professionalism; and

WHEREAS, under the visionary leadership of Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., the members of the Virginia Capitol Police are attentive, responsive, and courteous to all persons who enter state buildings and grounds; and

WHEREAS, thousands of school children, other Virginians, and persons around the nation and the

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58 world visit the historic buildings and grounds of Capitol Square annually to bask in its beauty and to
59 walk the paths trod by many of America's founding fathers, great Virginians, and other national and
60 international dignitaries; and

61 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's seat of government is safe due to the diligent efforts of the
62 Virginia Capitol Police to ensure the public's safety and tranquility; now, therefore, be it

63 RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly
64 commend Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., Chief of Police, and the Virginia Capitol Police; and, be it

65 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for
66 presentation to Colonel George B. Mason, Jr., Chief of the Virginia Capitol Police, requesting that he
67 further disseminate copies of this resolution to the men and women of the Virginia Capitol Police, in
68 order that they may be apprised of the General Assembly's appreciation and gratitude for their
69 exceptional service to the Commonwealth.