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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 113

Offered February 12, 2014

Commending Wise County and Norton City Public Schools.

Patrons—Kilgore, Chafin and O'Quinn

WHEREAS, Wise County and Norton City Public Schools cooperated on a program to successfully enable students to choose and plan a science experiment to be conducted aboard the International Space Station in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, in strategic partnership with NanoRacks, LLC, launched the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) in June 2010, as a United States national science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education program meant to inspire America's next generation of scientists and engineers; and

WHEREAS, Wise County and Norton City Public Schools engaged hundreds of students in grades three through 12 in a two-way communication with astronauts aboard the International Space Station, in lectures with civil and commercial astronauts, and in interaction with several NASA exhibits and the Apollo 14 moon rocks at the University of Virginia's College at Wise; and

WHEREAS, Wise County and Norton City Public Schools engaged hundreds of students in grades three through 12 in high-powered model rocket launches, in a zero-gravity parabolic flight experience by Powell Valley teacher David Stallard, and in the use of digital cameras aboard NASA's GRAIL (Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory) for close observations of the moon by students; and

WHEREAS, Wise County and Norton City Public Schools engaged hundreds of students in grades three through 12 in numerous astronomy observations at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, in DEVELOP Earth Science satellite remote sensing projects, and in on-site observation of commercial space launches from the NASA Wallops Flight Facility; and

WHEREAS, Wise County Public Schools, through significant planning, applied for and was accepted in the SSEP Mission 3 to the International Space Station; Wise County was just one of the few communities across the United States with this distinct honor and only the second community in this great Commonwealth to participate in the program; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of Wise County students took part in a mission patch design competition that resulted in two patches being selected and flown to low Earth orbit; and

WHEREAS, the SSEP Review Board chose the Denaturation of the Protein Casein in Microgravity project as the Wise County flight experiment, which then underwent and passed formal flight safety review procedures at NASA Johnson Space Center's office of toxicology; and

WHEREAS, the Wise County students' flight experiment was placed aboard the Cygnus spacecraft and launched atop an Antares booster rocket to the International Space Station at 1:07 PM EDT on January 9, 2014, from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport located at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility in Accomack County; and

WHEREAS, the space microgravity researchers included Eastside High School scholars, Hunter Helbert, Aaron Sexton, Chance Jones, and Evan Swecker and John I. Burton scholars, J. W. Wharton and Kevin VanNess; and

WHEREAS, Wise County and Norton City Public Schools' involvement and success in the program resulted from the unwavering leadership of four public school teachers, Nellibrook Fultz, Ann Wade, Sherri Martin, and Jane Carter, and capable oversight by Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority board of directors member Jack Kennedy, all of whom helped show Virginia's next generation of scientists and engineers a pathway to the stars; and

WHEREAS, the Wise County and Norton City greater community of businesses, organizations, and parents made this extraordinary, real-world adventure in STEM education possible; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Wise County and Norton City Public Schools hereby be commended on successfully placing a science experiment aboard the International Space Station; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to Wise County Public Schools and Norton City Public Schools as an expression of the House of Delegates' immense pride in what the two jurisdictions have accomplished with their students in space science microgravity research.

INTRODUCED

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