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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 607

Offered January 14, 2015

Prefiled January 13, 2015

Designating July 16, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as National Atomic Veterans Day in Virginia.

Patrons—Robinson, Anderson, Cox and Keam

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, throughout the Commonwealth's and the nation's history, brave Virginians have answered the call of duty and service, defending our freedoms as members of the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Manhattan Project, the United States conducted the Trinity nuclear test—the first detonation of a nuclear device—in New Mexico on July 16, 1945; and

WHEREAS, over 200,000 American service members, including Virginians, participated in aboveground nuclear tests between 1945 and 1962, were part of the United States military occupation forces in or around Hiroshima and Nagasaki before 1946, or were held as a prisoner of war in or near Hiroshima or Nagasaki; and

WHEREAS, these atomic veterans may have been exposed to radiation as a result of their military service and, due to that exposure, may have developed cancer or other medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, many atomic veterans were prevented by secrecy laws or oaths from seeking medical care or disability compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for conditions they may have developed as a result of radiation exposure; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act, freeing atomic veterans to describe their military involvement in nuclear testing in order to file for VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, atomic veterans may be eligible for free medical care from the VA and compensation in the form of a partial or full service-connected disability allowance, including potential payments to a surviving spouse or children; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services provides free assistance to Virginia veterans and their dependents in developing and submitting disability compensation claims to the VA; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Atomic Veterans was formed in 1979 to help atomic veterans obtain medical care and assistance; and

WHEREAS, it is altogether fitting and proper that atomic veterans be recognized for their service and sacrifice to the nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate July 16, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as National Atomic Veterans Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the National Association of Atomic Veterans so that members of the organization and other atomic veterans and their families may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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