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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 734**

Offered February 2, 2015

*Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps.*

Patrons—McClellan, Anderson, Bulova, Carr, Fariss, Filler-Corn, Fowler, Herring, Hope, Joannou, Keam, Kilgore, Kory, Leftwich, Lingamfelter, Loupassi, Mason, McQuinn, Minchew, Morrissey, O'Bannon, Peace, Plum, Rust, Simon, Sullivan, Surovell, Ward, Ware and Yancey; Senators: Alexander, Barker, Black, Carrico, Chafin, Colgan, Cosgrove, Dance, Deeds, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Hanger, Howell, Lewis, Locke, Marsden, Martin, McDougale, McEachin, McWaters, Miller, Newman, Norment, Obenshain, Petersen, Reeves, Ruff, Saslaw, Smith, Stanley, Stosch, Stuart, Vogel, Wagner, Watkins and Wexton

WHEREAS, on January 27, 1945, Soviet forces liberated thousands of prisoners from the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps in Nazi-occupied Poland; and

WHEREAS, Auschwitz-Birkenau was a huge complex of camps, including Auschwitz and Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Auschwitz III-Monowitz, and 45 satellite camps, each designated as extermination centers, concentration camps, or forced-labor camps; and

WHEREAS, one million of the civilians who perished at the camp were Jews, along with 100,000 non-Jewish Poles, Roma, and Sinti; Soviet prisoners of war; Jehovah's Witnesses; homosexual men and women; and other ethnic minorities; and

WHEREAS, the prisoners included farmers, tailors, seamstresses, factory hands, accountants, doctors, teachers, small-business owners, clergy, intellectuals, government officials, and political activists; and

WHEREAS, the prisoners were subjected to torture, forced labor, starvation, rape, inhumane medical experiments, and forced separation from loved ones; and

WHEREAS, though the number of living witnesses to these atrocities decreases each year, the citizens of the Commonwealth must never forget the terrible crimes against humanity committed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps; and

WHEREAS, ethnic and religious persecution continues to claim lives in all corners of the globe, and the citizens of the Commonwealth must educate future generations and promote understanding of the dangers of intolerance in order to prevent similar injustices from happening again; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Holocaust Museum as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for the significance of this event and the tragic loss of life at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps.

INTRODUCED

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