

2016 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 332

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of Capitol Square.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 9, 2016

Agreed to by the Senate, March 8, 2016

WHEREAS, the creation of Capitol Square dates to February 28, 1816, during a period of great growth for the nation after the end of the War of 1812, when the Virginia General Assembly voted to enhance and improve the area around the Capitol; and

WHEREAS, between 1816 and 1818, Maximilian Godefroy designed an ordered, symmetrical, Neoclassical plan with formal walkways and a ceremonial road leading from the entrance on what is now 9th Street to the Virginia Governor's Mansion, and it was implemented; and

WHEREAS, Capitol Square was one of the nation's earliest designed public spaces, and the framework of the original design is still evident; and

WHEREAS, the cast-iron and wrought-iron fence, designed by Paul-Alexis Sabbaton, was installed in 1818, making Capitol Square the oldest surviving enclosed public space in the country; and

WHEREAS, from 1850 to 1860, John Notman modernized Capitol Square in the Picturesque style, relying on the use of native plants and high-canopy shade trees in a seemingly natural arrangement, as well as adding meandering walkways and elegant fountains; it was the first use of the Picturesque style in America for a public park; and

WHEREAS, the creation of Capitol Square inspired the City of Richmond to launch an urban reforestation program and develop a system of similar urban parks throughout the city, with Monroe Park and Libby Park among surviving examples; and

WHEREAS, Capitol Square features a unique collection of architectural styles and works from different eras, including the oldest purpose-built executive mansion in the country, the Bell Tower, Old City Hall, and the George Washington Equestrian Monument; and

WHEREAS, Capitol Square in its entirety has been recognized as a National Historic Landmark, as has the Capitol itself, and portions of Capitol Square have also been inscribed on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage Sites; and

WHEREAS, the Department of General Services and the Capitol Square Preservation Council have developed the Landscape Master Plan to document the historical significance of Capitol Square and set standards for maintaining the character and integrity of the site as both an essential part of the Commonwealth's heritage and a functional, attractive public space; and

WHEREAS, Capitol Square is the center of the Commonwealth, both symbolically as the home of state government and physically as the site of the zero milestone for Virginia's highways; it has been a model for the country in architecture, city planning, and urban park development and is befitting of Thomas Jefferson's ideal of a Temple on the Hill that is both inspiring and welcoming to the public; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby celebrate the 200th anniversary of Capitol Square, an example of the importance of good stewardship of the Commonwealth's historical resources for future generations; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the Department of General Services, the Capitol Square Preservation Council, and the Virginia Capitol Foundation as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the importance of Capitol Square to the history and heritage of the Commonwealth and the nation.

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