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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 336**

Offered February 22, 2016

*Designating 2016 as the Year of Shakespeare in Virginia.*

Patrons—Filler-Corn, Bell, Richard P. and Mason

Unanimous consent to introduce

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, 2016 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, one of the most influential and widely known poets and playwrights of all time, whose contributions to literature and theatre are unparalleled; and

WHEREAS, William Shakespeare produced some of the finest examples of theatrical comedies and histories and redefined the romantic and tragicomic genres; his works have achieved renown for their exceptional characterization, plot, artistry of language, and sheer spectacle; and

WHEREAS, William Shakespeare completed 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and many other works; his plays have been translated into every major living language, and he is a named author on school curricula in more than half the countries of the world; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia was named in honor of Elizabeth I of England—also known as the Virgin Queen—who ruled England for much of William Shakespeare's life, and in 1751, the London Company of Comedians presented one of the first professional productions of Shakespeare in the Americas in Williamsburg; and

WHEREAS, many states and countries celebrate the life and legacy of William Shakespeare, and the Commonwealth's official Shakespeare festival, the Virginia Shakespeare Festival, is held annually at The College of William and Mary, which begins its 2016 festival season on June 29, 2016; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Washington and Lee University, and the American Shakespeare Center launched the Virginia Shakespeare Initiative, a statewide celebration of his legacy, lasting from September 2015 through December 2016; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, educational and cultural institutions in the Commonwealth are encouraged to focus on the genius of William Shakespeare's works and the lasting influence of his contributions, and all Virginians are encouraged to take part in Shakespeare-related events; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate 2016 as the Year of Shakespeare in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Washington and Lee University, and the American Shakespeare Center so that members of these organizations 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 this designation on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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