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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 87

Offered March 10, 2016

Commemorating the 235th anniversary of the defense of Richmond in 1781.

Patrons—McEachin, Favola, Saslaw and Surovell

WHEREAS, 235 years ago, in January 1781, the traitor Benedict Arnold, on his first command for the British Army after his defection from the Continental Army under the command of George Washington, invaded Virginia with a force of 1,600 men; and

WHEREAS, that invasion force made its way through the undefended capital city of Richmond, compelling the evacuation of Governor Thomas Jefferson and other leaders of the Commonwealth and the withdrawal of important stores and materiel; and

WHEREAS, the entire city and its outskirts required a defense, and there were only 200 Virginia militiamen under the command of Colonel John Nicholas to defend the capital; and

WHEREAS, these 200 brave Virginians, outnumbered eight to one, lacked anything near the artillery, land and river transportation, supplies, and materiel of the invading enemy; and

WHEREAS, despite a sparse population from which to draw men, impassable waterways, and other obstacles to a proper defense, these brave Virginians defended their capital city, engaging Benedict Arnold's picket on January 4, 1781, on the outskirts of Richmond, in what is now the western edge of the historic Fan District; and

WHEREAS, in prelude to the ultimate Revolutionary War victory at Yorktown 10 months later, Colonel John Nicholas and the Richmond militiamen used unconventional tactics and, accounts say, "Repulsed Arnold's attack" and had it "driven in" before Arnold's ultimate brief occupation and burning of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, in defense of their homes and to secure the liberties of American independence, Colonel John Nicholas and the Virginians under his command made a significant contribution to the founding of an independent Commonwealth of Virginia and United States of America, free of British rule; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the 235th anniversary of the defense of Richmond in 1781 hereby be commemorated; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's appreciation for the historical significance of this Revolutionary War battle in the City of Richmond.

INTRODUCED

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