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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1019

Offered February 17, 2017

Commending Fairfax County.

Patrons—Murphy, Albo, Boysko, Bulova, Filler-Corn, Hugo, Keam, Kory, Krizek, LeMunyon, Levine, Lopez, Plum, Sickles, Simon, Sullivan and Watts; Senators: Barker, Ebbin, Favola, Howell, Petersen, Saslaw, Surovell and Wexton

WHEREAS, Fairfax County is celebrating the 275th anniversary of its founding in 2017, and, for three centuries, its proud and diverse residents have had a front row seat to the historic events that have shaped the Commonwealth and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax County is the second richest and most populous locality in the Commonwealth and the Washington, D.C., region, and its roots reach back to the earliest days of the nation; the first people to inhabit or set foot in Fairfax County were Ice Age hunter-gatherers, at least 12,000 years before Captain John Smith arrived in 1608 to explore the lands bordering the Potomac River; and

WHEREAS, the Algonquian-speaking Dogue was the major tribe of local Native Americans in the area and they lived along the streams and rivers, especially the Occoquan and the Potomac, in the territory that is today Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, when Europeans explored and settled the region, they practiced the new agricultural, hunting, and fishing skills taught to them by the Native Americans, whose heritage remains an important part of Fairfax County's history; and

WHEREAS, in 1649, King Charles II of England granted land in the Virginia colony between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers to seven of his loyal supporters; by 1690, this land was in the possession of the Fairfax family, and it eventually came under the ownership of Thomas, the sixth Lord Fairfax of Cameron, after whom the county is named; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax County was formed in 1742 from the northern portion of Prince William County, and at the time it included all of present-day Loudoun and Arlington Counties and the Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax; and

WHEREAS, the first Fairfax County Courthouse was located near what is now Tysons Corner; the courthouse was relocated to Alexandria from 1752 to 1800 and then was moved to its current location in what is now the City of Fairfax; and

WHEREAS, major changes in Fairfax County's lifestyle and character occurred in the 18th century, when roads and mills were built, and tobacco was the primary source of wealth and commerce in the county's agricultural economy; and

WHEREAS, two bold and visionary men who played important roles in the American Revolution made their homes in Fairfax County in the 18th century: George Washington of Mount Vernon, and George Mason of Gunston Hall, led the patriots in the cause of freedom; and

WHEREAS, by the 1790s, the population of Fairfax County had grown to more than 12,000, 42 percent of whom were slaves, and, in 1791, the General Assembly ceded a portion of Fairfax County to the federal government in order to create the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, by the early 1800s, Fairfax County's soil was unfertile from overplanting, and many farmers left for better land; in the 1840s, new farmers from the North, many from New York, moved to Fairfax County and began to buy up the old farms, plant new crops, and employ new agricultural methods on the abandoned fields; and

WHEREAS, prior to the Civil War, an agricultural revival was underway, and new railroads and roads were constructed to increase access in and around Fairfax County; however, the economic recovery would soon be curtailed by war; and

WHEREAS, due to its proximity to Washington, D.C., Fairfax County was on the front lines of military activity during the Civil War; the county was home to several of the Union Army's forts defending the capital city, and thousands of troops were stationed within or passed through its borders, including Col. John S. Mosby, the Confederate "Gray Ghost"; and

WHEREAS, Clara Barton, who later founded the American Red Cross, cared for wounded men from the battles of Second Manassas and Ox Hill at St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church at Fairfax Station, and the Confederate spy Laura Ratchliffe also operated in Fairfax County during the war; and

WHEREAS, after the conclusion of the Civil War, Union soldiers and freed slaves were among those who settled in Fairfax County and continued the agricultural tradition; local farmers engaged in dairy farming, stock and poultry farming, flour milling, and growing fruits and vegetables to supply the needs of Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, in 1870, local control of government in Fairfax County shifted to the board of

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57 supervisors system, and the county established its public school system; the population remained around
58 12,000, but that would change dramatically over the coming decades; and

59 WHEREAS, the dawn of the 20th century began a period of great prosperity for Fairfax County,
60 much of it brought by new railroad and electric trolley lines that carried people from Fairfax County
61 into Washington, D.C., to work in government jobs or attend school; and

62 WHEREAS, following the Great Depression, through World War II, and up to the present day,
63 Fairfax County's population growth was fueled by the expansion of the federal government and aided by
64 improvements in transportation, especially the completion of the Capital Beltway in 1964; and

65 WHEREAS, Fairfax County has been called one of the great economic success stories of modern
66 times; it is home to Fortune 500 companies and two commercial areas, Tysons Corner and Reston, that
67 are among the largest central business districts in the United States today; and

68 WHEREAS, home to more than 1.1 million residents in 2015, Fairfax County is the
69 Commonwealth's most populous jurisdiction; the median household income of its affluent and
70 well-educated population ranks among the highest median household incomes in the nation; and

71 WHEREAS, over the past 275 years, Fairfax County has transformed from a rural community with
72 an agrarian economy to a predominantly residential Washington, D.C., suburb to the complex and
73 populous commercial and residential hub it is today; and

74 WHEREAS, the citizens of Fairfax County can be proud of their long history, their diverse heritage,
75 and their role as a highly sophisticated modern community with national and international importance;
76 now, therefore, be it

77 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby
78 commend Fairfax County on the occasion of the 275th anniversary of its founding; and, be it

79 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution
80 for presentation to Sharon Bulova, chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, as an expression of
81 the General Assembly's admiration for the county's illustrious history and significant contributions to the
82 Commonwealth.