

2017 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 297

Offered January 13, 2017

Recognizing the influence of Christian heritage in Virginia.

Patrons—Miyares (By Request) and Cole

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, on April 26, 1607, a chartered expedition, subsidized by the Virginia Company to establish colonies on the coast of North America, disembarked upon the banks of Cape Henry, now Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Robert Hunt, the expedition's official cleric, and the members of the expedition erected a wooden cross in symbolic reference to the Christian faith, invoked a public prayer of dedication, and pledged that the Gospel message would be spread throughout the region and, from that region, abroad; and

WHEREAS, the ensuing Jamestown settlement was the site of the first public communion ceremony in Virginia, in the tradition of the Lord's Supper of the New Testament; and

WHEREAS, the Jamestown settlement was the first permanent English colony in North America and included a recognized church wherein Christian worship, teachings, and baptisms were conducted in accordance with the Gospel message, as exemplified by the baptism of Pocahontas, a member of the Powhatan tribe of Native Americans in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Judeo-Christian principles, as established in the Law of Moses and set forth from the earliest days of recorded history, of equality, human dignity, and equal protection under the law have provided an incalculable influence on law and thought throughout history, and in particular to our shared English common law tradition and Western civilization; and

WHEREAS, these same principles of equality, human dignity, and equal protection rooted in Mosaic law influenced America's foremost Civil Rights leaders, including the esteemed Virginia Civil Rights attorney and leader Oliver White Hill, Sr., whose own paternal grandfather founded Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Richmond, which the Hill family attended and where Oliver Hill attended Sunday school; he worked diligently, influenced by his Christian faith, to end racial discrimination and help end the doctrine of separate but equal; and

WHEREAS, according to the Pew Research Center, millions of Virginians, representing various denominations, identify as Christians, carrying on the faith traditions brought to North America by its first settlers; and

WHEREAS, thousands of churches in the Commonwealth continue to provide spiritual leadership and education; care for the poor, indigent, and homeless as commanded by the Gospel message; and conduct generous outreach in their communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the enormous influence of Christian heritage and faith throughout the Commonwealth's 400-year history be recognized; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to Rodney Walker and First-Landing Festivals, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the Virginia House of Delegates in this matter.

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