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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 617

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled January 3, 2019

Designating 2019 as the Year of Reconciliation and Civility in Virginia.

Patrons—McQuinn, Adams, D.M., Bourne, Bulova, Carr, Delaney, Filler-Corn, Heretick, Hope, Hurst, Keam, Kory, Krizek, Landes, Leftwich, Levine, Lopez, Murphy, Peace, Rasoul, Reid, Rodman, Sickles, Simon, Sullivan, Thomas, Torian, Toscano, Tyler, Ward, Ware and Watts; Senators: Barker and Dance

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence acknowledges that all people have inalienable rights endowed by their Creator, and the Constitution of the United States guarantees equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, these spiritual, political, and economic truths are fundamental American guarantees, but they are not fully realized in every community, and with the demographics of the country shifting, it is estimated that the United States will be a majority non-white nation in 30 years, making the need for greater understanding of equality and race relations critical; and

WHEREAS, Virginia was the destination of the first enslaved African people, the epicenter of the American slave trade, the capital of the Confederacy, and in 2017, the site of a violent, deadly protest held by white supremacists in Charlottesville, but the Commonwealth has also been the home of trailblazing civil rights leaders like Barbara Johns, Oliver Hill, and Maggie Walker and the nation's first black Governor, Doug Wilder; and

WHEREAS, Virginians for Reconciliation is a citizen volunteer group formed to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the country's first enslaved African people landing in Virginia in August 1619 and to reflect upon Virginia's role in the enslavement of African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Virginians for Reconciliation will host a series of events to help participants understand and accept the hard truths that exist in black and white America, with the goal of establishing a new dynamic where people of different races will have a much healthier dialogue and work more closely together to advance the common good; and

WHEREAS, Virginians for Reconciliation will partner with American Evolution, which will also commemorate key historical events that took place in Virginia in 1619 through a series of exhibitions, educational programs, and cultural festivals; and

WHEREAS, Virginians have a unique opportunity in 2019 to accelerate the healing of racial wounds by not only acknowledging the depths of racial divisions but by developing solutions that move the nation toward unity and reconciliation economically, socially, and legally; and

WHEREAS, all Virginians are encouraged to observe the Year of Reconciliation and Civility by raising awareness and taking steps to promote a more just and civil society in America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate 2019 as the Year of Reconciliation and Civility in Virginia to promote racial healing and unity; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to Virginians for Reconciliation and American Evolution requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they 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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