

2019 SPECIAL SESSION I

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4002

Offered July 9, 2019

Prefiled July 8, 2019

Recognizing that the Virginia Beach Tragedy Fund is performing an essential government service with respect to the Virginia Beach mass shooting.

Patron—Turpin

Referred to Committee on Appropriations

WHEREAS, on May 31, 2019, 12 people were killed and four people were wounded in a mass shooting at a municipal building in the City of Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, the victims and their families incurred medical, funeral, and other expenses as a result of the mass shooting; and

WHEREAS, the resources of the City of Virginia Beach and the Commonwealth were burdened due to the increased need for public safety personnel, first responders, public health professionals, and other officials who worked long hours in response to the mass shooting; and

WHEREAS, United Way of South Hampton Roads, a nonprofit organization that the Internal Revenue Service has certified as tax-exempt under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, worked with the City of Virginia Beach to establish the Virginia Beach Tragedy Fund (the Fund); and

WHEREAS, after the mass shooting, people and businesses showed great generosity in offering help to the victims of the mass shooting; and

WHEREAS, the City of Virginia Beach was the recipient of many of these offers to help and directed monetary donations from numerous people and businesses to the Fund; and

WHEREAS, the City of Virginia Beach tasked United Way of South Hampton Roads with the burden of centralizing the community's efforts to help the victims of mass shootings, ensuring that monetary donations are used to help the victims of mass shootings, and fulfilling the same functions if a similar tragedy occurs in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Fund is intended to decrease the likelihood that community members' generosity will be subverted by fraudulent charities; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly deems it prudent and necessary that a charity exist to address the loss suffered by victims and their families, provide for final arrangements, memorialize the heroism of first responders and community members, and thereby relieve and lessen the burdens of government and promote the health of victims and the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the Fund was created to address these concerns; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Beach Tragedy Fund be recognized as performing an essential government service with respect to the Virginia Beach mass shooting; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Fund has the purpose of lessening the burden of government and promoting health generally in relation to mass shootings and similar tragedies that may occur in the future; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Commonwealth recognizes that the Fund (i) provides a single vehicle to receive the overwhelming number of monetary donations that community members have made in response to the mass shooting, thereby avoiding the misdirection of donations to fraudulent charities; (ii) provides the infrastructure to coordinate the collection, administration, and distribution of funds in a manner consistent with the Commonwealth's interest in helping the victims of mass shootings; (iii) acts as a central resource to allow victims of mass shootings to find appropriate help; (iv) maintains the infrastructure that would allow it to respond immediately if a similar tragedy occurred in the future, in order to lessen the burdens of government; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Fund shall fulfill the essential government service of developing a protocol for financially assisting the victims of mass shootings; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That on behalf of the City of Virginia Beach and the Commonwealth, the Fund shall work with Jeffrey Breit, Administrator of the Fund, to develop a protocol for the distribution of financial assistance to those victims most seriously affected by mass shootings and provide recommendations for final distributions; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That a person's or business's donation to the Fund shall not influence any other business such person or business may have with the Commonwealth or any of its instrumentalities; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That should any officer or employee of the Commonwealth have reason to

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59 believe that a donation is improperly influencing business with the Commonwealth, he shall
60 communicate the reasons for his belief to the Department of State Police or any other appropriate
61 investigatory officer or agency; and, be it

62 RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution
63 to the City of Virginia Beach, the Governor, and the Internal Revenue Service so that they may be
64 apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.