

## 2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 682

*Commending the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Virginia.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2023

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2023

WHEREAS, for 100 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Virginia has served and supported veterans and active duty service members and their families throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) was originally established in 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, many of whom returned home sick or wounded, banded together to advocate for their rights and benefits; and

WHEREAS, the VFW was designed to foster camaraderie among veterans and provide vital support, outreach, and advocacy on their behalf; from humble beginnings with a few chapters in Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, the organization grew to more than 5,000 members by 1915; and

WHEREAS, the VFW Department of Virginia was chartered in February 1923, and members met in Norfolk the following month to formally organize the department, which began with 13 posts and 663 members; and

WHEREAS, the VFW Department of Virginia has since grown to encompass 127 posts, with 40,000 members of those posts or their auxiliaries; members of the VFW Department of Virginia have served in all branches of the United States Armed Forces and every war over the past 100 years; and

WHEREAS, the VFW Department of Virginia has established an extensive network of service claims agents to assist veterans in navigating the sometimes difficult and confusing process of filing claims for their earned benefits; the organization has helped Virginia veterans secure more than \$13 million in earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, the VFW Department of Virginia has advocated for many pieces of legislation essential to veterans at both the state and federal levels, including the establishment of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Montgomery GI Bill, the passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act and the PACT Act, the elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset, and much more; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Veterans Foundation, the official nonprofit foundation of the VFW Department of Virginia, supports many programs and initiatives to enhance the lives of active duty service members and veterans, including grants for community service projects, scholarships, and improvements to base housing; and

WHEREAS, the posts and members of the VFW Department of Virginia actively support their surrounding communities through volunteer service and donations to charitable organizations; in the last five years alone, the VFW Department of Virginia and its members have performed 1,233,783 volunteer hours and donated \$9,155,822 to worthy causes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Virginia on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Virginia as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's achievements on behalf of the men and women who have served and sacrificed in defense of the nation.

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