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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 78

Offered January 18, 2024

*Designating March 31, in 2024 and in each succeeding year, as FIRST Robotics Day in Virginia.*

Patrons—Carr, Bulova, Herring, Hope, Lopez, Simon and Watts

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, For the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, or FIRST, is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to preparing young people for the future through a suite of inclusive, team-based robotics programs for ages four through 18; and

WHEREAS, robotics is rapidly proving to be one of the most effective, compelling, and engaging means for teaching and reinforcing fundamental science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts as well as inspiring the nation's youth to pursue STEM-related careers, thereby helping to create a highly skilled, 21st-century American workforce; and

WHEREAS, there is a strong need to recognize America's leadership in robotics technology; educate the public on robotics technology's broad potential, growing importance, and future impact on American society; underscore the need for increased investment in robotics technology research and development; and inspire the nation's youth to pursue careers in robotics and other STEM-related fields; and

WHEREAS, the United States has the largest number of academic and research organizations with dedicated programs focused on the advancement of robotics technology; and

WHEREAS, aptitude in mathematics, science, and engineering is essential for a knowledge-based society; and

WHEREAS, deep, hands-on STEM experiences at school districts around the country hold the potential to build strong foundations for STEM literacy; increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM; and prepare the STEM workforce for the future; and

WHEREAS, not all STEM jobs require a traditional four-year degree, so a greater and more diverse array of pathways toward STEM education should be encouraged; and

WHEREAS, FIRST has a unique relationship with the Commonwealth and businesses and organizations operating in the Commonwealth, with the organization being sponsored by NASA Langley, Dominion Energy, Inc., Booz Allen Hamilton Holding Corporation, Bechtel Corporation, Leidos, and Newport News Shipbuilding, among other partners; and

WHEREAS, FIRST is partnered with several public colleges in the Commonwealth, including Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, George Mason University, James Madison University, Virginia State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, FIRST Chesapeake, a regional district of FIRST, supports more than 300 robotics teams, totaling over 6,700 kindergarten through 12th grade students and 650 volunteer mentors; and

WHEREAS, FIRST robotics has developed deep partnerships across the Commonwealth's education, nonprofit, economic development, government, and industry sectors since receiving its originating state support from the former Virginia Business-Education Partnership (VBEP) in 2000; and

WHEREAS, the emerging market for robotics and related technology in various sectors, including health care, national defense, homeland security, energy, manufacturing, logistics, transportation, agriculture, education, consumer goods, and others is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of nearly 20 percent over the next few years to become a \$27 billion industry worldwide; and

WHEREAS, robotics is a critical technology capable in the near term of contributing to the economic recovery by creating new jobs, increasing productivity, improving quality of life, and increasing worker safety; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate March 31, in 2024 and in each succeeding year, as FIRST Robotics Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to For the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology so that members of the organization 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 the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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