

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 543

Reaffirming the General Assembly's goal to appropriate one dollar per capita for the support of the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 2, 1997

Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 1997

WHEREAS, the arts enrich the natural character, individual spirit, and quality of life of the citizens of the Commonwealth and have become an integral part of Virginia's education, history and culture; and

WHEREAS, nonprofit arts organizations represent an important asset in the state's economic development, creating more than 7,800 jobs, bringing \$170 million into the economy, and bolstering the image of the state's tourism and travel industries; and

WHEREAS, public investment in the arts sends a strong message to the private sector and creates leverage for arts organizations to obtain additional private support; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, through its grant process, provides essential operating support for nonprofit arts organizations and educational activities that reached one million Virginia children last year; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1980s, Virginia leaders in government, business, and the arts embraced a public funding goal of one dollar per capita to be allocated for support of the Commission; and

WHEREAS, by the 1989-1990 fiscal year, state and federal funding of the Commission had exceeded \$5.5 million and Virginia was within a few hundred thousand dollars of reaching the dollar-per-capita goal; and

WHEREAS, the recession of 1989 coupled with a change in the spending priorities of Virginia's new administration, resulted in substantial and disproportionate cuts to the Commission that plummeted Virginia's support to 30 cents a person; and

WHEREAS, even though some of the funding for the Commission has been restored over the past several years through modest increases proposed by the General Assembly, Virginia still ranks third from the bottom of all states in its support of the arts; and

WHEREAS, the national average among states is just shy of a dollar per capita, Virginia — even with last year's increases in arts funding — provides just 47 cents per person; and

WHEREAS, the Commission Studying Creative Solutions for Funding for the Arts in the Commonwealth pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 174 (1996) determined that appropriating one dollar per capita for the Virginia Commission for the Arts is a realistic goal that will confirm the state's long-term commitment to supporting the arts while providing a funding incentive for private contributors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly reaffirm its goal to appropriate one dollar per capita for the support of the Virginia Commission for the Arts; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the president of the Virginians for the Arts with a request to disseminate this resolution to the group's membership so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

ENROLLED

HJ543ER