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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 401

Offered January 26, 2009

Designating May 1, in 2009 and in each succeeding year, as Law Day in Virginia.

Patron—Petersen

Unanimous consent to introduce

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in 1957, American Bar Association President Charles S. Rhyne, a Washington, D.C., attorney, first envisioned a special day to celebrate the rule of law and the legal system of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Law Day was originally a celebration during the Cold War of the benefits of America's system of laws in opposition to communism; and beginning on May 1, 1958, according to Charles S. Rhyne, "newspapers, television and radio programs, bar associations, and citizens throughout the country celebrated the benefits of our system of rule of law, in stark contrast to the Soviets' grim show of force"; and

WHEREAS, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, by proclamation, declared May 1, 1958, as the first Law Day, stating that "it is fitting that the people of this Nation should remember with pride and vigilantly guard the great heritage of liberty, justice and equality under law which our forefathers bequeathed to us"; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Congress, by joint resolution, designated May 1 as the official date for celebrating Law Day in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Law Day each year continues to celebrate our system of the rule of law, as well as supports and promotes specific civic activities across the nation, including funding the public law libraries, providing pro bono legal services for those who cannot afford legal representation, conducting court tours for high school students, and numerous other education and outreach programs in schools and in communities; and

WHEREAS, 2009 marks the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the quintessential American lawyer-president, and the American Bar Association's theme for Law Day 2009 in honor of our 16th president is "A Legacy of Liberty"; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association, the Virginia Bar Association, and local associations throughout the United States all encourage efforts nationwide to commemorate President Lincoln, who devoted much of his adult life to the practice of law, by exploring his life, oratory, and many great achievements; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate May 1, in 2009 and in each succeeding year, as Law Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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