

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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1 **HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 36**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 14, 2026

4 *Designating August 1, in 2026 and each succeeding year, as Internet Safety and Online Predator Awareness*
5 *Day.*

6 Patron—Walker

7 Committee Referral Pending

8 WHEREAS, the internet is an essential tool for education, communication, and commerce, yet it also
9 poses significant risks, including cyberbullying, identity theft, and exploitation by online predators; and

10 WHEREAS, in 2024, Virginians age 60 and older filed approximately 3,841 complaints with the Federal
11 Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), reporting losses exceeding \$106.6
12 million and placing the Commonwealth 11th among all states for elder fraud losses; and

13 WHEREAS, according to the FBI's national data, individuals age 60 and older filed the highest number of
14 IC3 complaints and suffered more than \$4.8 billion in reported losses nationwide in 2024, contributing to
15 total U.S. losses of \$16.6 billion across 859,532 complaints, a 33 percent increase over 2023; and

16 WHEREAS, child exploitation remains a critical concern, with an estimated 500,000 online predators
17 active daily and one in five children age 10 to 17 reporting online solicitation by strangers; and

18 WHEREAS, youth in the United States are increasingly exposed to online dangers, with over half of teens
19 reporting experiences with cyberbullying, and according to a 2025 study published in the *Journal of Medical*
20 *Internet Research*, 83 percent of children and adolescents have been exposed to content related to self-harm
21 or suicide on social media; and

22 WHEREAS, it is vital to ensure a safer digital environment by fostering partnerships with law-
23 enforcement agencies, schools, and community organizations to promote internet safety education and
24 awareness; and

25 WHEREAS, public awareness, community education, and early intervention empower young people to
26 recognize online dangers, reduce internet-related crimes, and promote a culture of digital safety and
27 responsibility; and

28 WHEREAS, on Internet Safety and Online Predator Awareness Day, and every day, citizens are
29 encouraged to recognize the importance of digital safety and take proactive steps to protect themselves and
30 their loved ones online; now, therefore, be it

31 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate
32 August 1, in 2026 and each succeeding year, as Internet Safety and Online Predator Awareness Day; and, be
33 it

34 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the
35 General Assembly's website.

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