

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 67

Offered February 23, 2026

Commending the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library.

Patron—Jordan

WHEREAS, the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library, known for decades as the Benjamin P. Chapman Memorial Library, celebrated its 100th anniversary on January 10, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the origins of the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library date to April 1924, when Smithfield's Shakespeare Class and Woman's Club secured funding from the Smithfield Town Council for a library; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library's first iteration opened on January 26, 1925, in what is today the old Town Hall on Institute Street with a collection of 100 books, including an autographed book of poems given by Richmond poet Nellie Parker Henson; and

WHEREAS, upon her death in 1945, Cora Leigh Chapman donated her home on South Church Street to serve as Smithfield's local library, which became thereafter known as the Benjamin P. Chapman Memorial Library; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, the Smithfield library became part of the Walter Cecil Rawls regional library system, later known as the Blackwater Regional Library, with Mildred Moreland serving its first official librarian; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library relocated for the last time in 1989 when it occupied the former Smithfield High School at 255 James Street, where it has served the community ever since; and

WHEREAS, over the past century, the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library has become an invaluable local institution and an important part of what makes Smithfield a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library hereby be commended on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Smithfield branch of the Blackwater Regional Library as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the library's history and its contributions to Smithfield and the Commonwealth.

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