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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 157

Offered March 12, 2026

Commending the North Grounds Softball League.

Patron—Surovell

WHEREAS, for 50 years, the North Grounds Softball League has facilitated friendly competition, camaraderie, and community building at the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in September 1976, students at the University of Virginia School of Law organized their own fall softball league on Copeley Field, an empty field across from Virginia Law and the Darden School of Business; Frederick Vogel, future Virginia Law professor J. Gordon Hylton, David Mullins, and Robert Barry were instrumental to the league's founding; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural season featured 15 teams with more than 200 players, most of whom were law students and faculty; the faculty team included G. Edward White, Thomas R. White III, future Virginia Law dean Robert Scott, and future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia Donald Lemons, while the student teams included Nancy Hudgins, future United States Senator George Allen, future United States Attorney Roscoe C. Howard, Jr., and future National Hockey League vice-president Ellis T. "Skip" Prince; and

WHEREAS, the teams were initially split into two divisions, and the "Copeley Singles" won the first championship; members of that first championship team included future New York Times crossword puzzle editor Will Shortz; and

WHEREAS, the league was originally called the Law School Softball League, but by the spring of 1977, it had become known as the North Grounds Softball League (NGSL), to reflect that teams from the Darden School of Business and the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School had joined; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 1977, then-Major League Baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn played in a softball game for the "Amazing Coneheads" team, and a photo of him pitching was published in The New York Times; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, NGSL has grown into a private, nonprofit organization, which has an annual membership of about 50 Virginia Law students; former members include the Honorable Amit Mehta, a judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and Halo Top Creamery co-founder Douglas Bouton; and

WHEREAS, NGSL currently runs fall and spring softball programs, and during the 2025–2026 season, the league fielded 38 teams in the fall and 50 in the spring; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, NGSL launched an inter-law school tournament known as the North Grounds Softball League Invitational, and by the late 1990s, the invitational had begun raising money for local causes; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 NGSL Softball Invitational attracted teams from 41 law schools from as far away as Massachusetts, Illinois, and Florida and raised \$45,000 for the Charlottesville-based nonprofit ReadyKids, a record for the event; and

WHEREAS, the 43rd NGSL Softball Invitational on March 27–29, 2026, will honor the league's 50th season with special events, while continuing to share the University of Virginia's uniquely collegial culture with law students from around the country; and

WHEREAS, over the past 50 years, NGSL has become more than a student league, growing into a beloved tradition through which thousands of University of Virginia students, faculty, and alumni connect, compete, and give back; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the North Grounds Softball League hereby be commended on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the North Grounds Softball League as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the league's contributions to community life on the University of Virginia campus and ongoing support for charitable organizations.

INTRODUCED

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