

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 299

Commending Richard Bonnie.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 10, 2026
Agreed to by the Senate, March 12, 2026

WHEREAS, Richard Bonnie, the Harrison Foundation Professor of Medicine and Law Emeritus at the University of Virginia School of Law, retired from teaching in 2023; and

WHEREAS, during his second year as a student at the University of Virginia School of Law (UVA Law), Richard Bonnie accepted an offer from the Air Force General Counsel's office at the Pentagon to fulfill his service commitment as a captain in the United States Air Force by serving in that office for three years; and

WHEREAS, after graduating, Richard Bonnie began teaching at UVA Law, where in 1970 he co-wrote with Charles Whitebread an influential article in the *Virginia Law Review* about the history of U.S. marijuana laws; the two later published *The Marijuana Conviction: A History of Marijuana Prohibition in the United States* in 1974, which became a classic of drug policy literature; and

WHEREAS, while working at the Pentagon in the early 1970s, Richard Bonnie regularly returned to UVA Law to present seminars on issues he was learning about in the military; he later served as associate director of President Richard Nixon's National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse; and

WHEREAS, following his three-year stint in Washington, Richard Bonnie returned to UVA Law in 1973 and went on to serve as the director of UVA's Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy, a collaboration between UVA Law and the UVA School of Medicine; and

WHEREAS, Richard Bonnie has co-authored leading textbooks on criminal law and public health law, chaired numerous academic studies, and is a widely recognized expert on public policies relating to mental health, public health, aging, and substance abuse, serving as the chair of the Supreme Court of Virginia's Commission on Mental Health Law Reform from 2006 to 2011; and

WHEREAS, Richard Bonnie gave generously of his time to teach and mentor his students at UVA Law, contributing greatly to their success in their legal careers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Richard Bonnie on the occasion of his retirement from teaching; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Richard Bonnie as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his distinguished service and best wishes in his future endeavors.

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