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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 477

Offered February 18, 2019

Commemorating the Stonewall Riots.

Patrons—Ebbin; Delegates: Adams, D.M., Levine and Sickles

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Stonewall Riots began in the early hours of June 28, 1969, during an aggressive police raid of the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in New York City, and reignited the night of June 29, engulfing much of Christopher Street; and

WHEREAS, during the same period of police persecution, a number of LGBTQ-friendly bars in Richmond, known as "the block" were shut down by Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control officers for serving gay, lesbian, and transgender clientele; and

WHEREAS, the Stonewall Riots led to the formation of two early LGBTQ rights activist groups: the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activist Alliance; on the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots, the first LGBTQ pride parades occurred in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago; and

WHEREAS, the Stonewall Riots also spurred the creation of some of the first LGBTQ rights groups in Virginia and encouraged organizations to challenge the laws in Virginia that criminalized homosexuality; and

WHEREAS, these groups included the Gay Alliance of Roanoke Valley; the Richmond Virginia Gay Alliance, which, led by activist Guy Kinman, organized the "Someone you know is gay... Maybe someone you love" billboard campaign in Richmond; and Virginia Pride, an organization which led the first LGBTQ pride parade in Virginia in the early 1970s; and

WHEREAS, the Newseum will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Inn uprising, when gay and transgender Americans rebelled against police abuse at a New York bar, with the "Rise Up: Stonewall and the LGBTQ Rights Movement" exhibit; and

WHEREAS, the Stonewall Riots served as a catalyst that galvanized the modern LGBTQ movement, inspiring a new generation of activists who fought for their rights to employment, military service, and marriage; before Stonewall, it was a common practice for doctors to want to "cure" LGBTQ Americans, who often found themselves rejected by family members and marginalized by society; and

WHEREAS, the Newseum, an interactive museum in Washington, D.C., dedicated to educating the public about the importance of the freedom of the press and the evolution of media communication, will host a groundbreaking exhibit on the Stonewall Riots and the birth of the modern LGBTQ rights movement from March 9, 2019, to January 5, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the exhibit features more than 90 artifacts and more than 100 images that illustrate the struggles and victories of the LGBTQ rights movement from before the Stonewall Inn uprising to the modern day; true to the Newseum's mission, the exhibit examines the powerful role that popular culture and media—television, movies, and sports—have had in changing attitudes toward LGBTQ people; and

WHEREAS, the Newseum's exhibit also explores the men and women—activists, journalists, and lawmakers—who used their First Amendment freedoms to fight for acceptance and equal rights, including Harry Hay, Frank Kameny, Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon, Harvey Milk, Leonard Matlovich, Barbara Gittings, Larry Kramer, the Reverend Troy Perry, Bishop Gene Robinson, Barney Frank, Tammy Baldwin, Edith Windsor, Jim Obergefell, Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and others; and

WHEREAS, with the exhibit's powerful storytelling, videos, interactive experiences, and public programs, the Newseum will educate visitors young and old about the ways in which First Amendment freedoms can be used to right wrongs and end mistreatment, as well as the ongoing struggle for equality; LGBTQ activists are still fighting against harassment, physical attacks, and the discriminatory and dangerous practice of conversion therapy, and working to end homelessness, which is particularly prevalent among LGBTQ teens; and

WHEREAS, "Rise Up: Stonewall and the LGBTQ Rights Movement" will be part of a nationwide effort to celebrate and commemorate how the Stonewall Inn uprising in 1969 inspired a movement for social change; after the exhibit closes at the Newseum in January 2020, it will travel to museums and venues across the country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the Stonewall Riots and the LGBTQ rights movement they inspired on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the riots; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of the LGBTQ community in Virginia as an expression of the General

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59 Assembly's admiration for their work to shine a light on a dark history and build a brighter future, as
60 well as for the historic significance of the Stonewall Riots.