



Dan Storck

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Joint Board Matter with Supervisor Dan Storck and Chairman Jeff McKay - Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States of America

October 20, 2020

During the 2020 Session, the Virginia General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, legislation to establish the American Revolution 250th Commission within the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States. On October 9, 2020, Governor Northam released the names of the appointees for Virginia's American Revolution 250th Commission. The legislation also mandated that George Mason's Gunston Hall would appoint and establish an Advisory Council composed of non-legislative citizen members.

The 250th anniversary is a celebration not only of how our country began, but the journey our country has been making over the last 250 years. We believe this should not only be a celebration of our history, but a celebration of our movement toward greater justice and equity, and the journey to fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence that all people "are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". A time to commemorate what defines us as a nation and the values that we hold most dearly. We have come far, but we have more work to do to ensure these values for all Americans.

Fairfax County should be a leader in creating and hosting appropriate events and celebrations, as well as supporting the Commonwealth's efforts to commemorate this 250th or Semiquincentennial anniversary celebration. In Virginia, particularly Fairfax County, has unique attributes to lead this celebration on a national level. From our founding fathers and Revolutionary

history, through the decades of struggle for human, civil, educational and environmental rights, our museums honoring those struggles through our present day commitments to One Fairfax and helping each resident and community reach their full potential..

Proposed Action

Therefore, I move that the Board of Supervisors:

- Appoint a seven person Semiquincentennial workgroup led by Gunston Hall including representatives from Visit Fairfax, Mount Vernon Estate, National Museum of the US Army, George Mason University, Fairfax County History Commission, Fairfax County Human Rights Committee, along with associated County history, equity and human rights staff members; and
- Charge the work group with providing recommendations by July 2021 to this Board of the preferred approach for organizing and leading county-related efforts for the inclusive observance and celebration. Recommendations to include high level SMART goals related to planning, promotion, types of civic, cultural, historical and educational activities, ways, means, timetables, approaches and accountability.

Attachment

2020 Legislation

Governor Northam's Press Release

Letter of Support from Gunston Hall

Letter of Support from Visit Fairfax

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 25 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 11,*
 3 *consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2544 through 2.2-2550, relating to the American Revolution 250*
 4 *Commission; report.*

5 [H 1424]

6 Approved

7 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

8 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 25 of Title 2.2 an article numbered**
 9 **11, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2544 through 2.2-2550, as follows:**

10 *Article 11.*11 *American Revolution 250 Commission.*12 **§ 2.2-2544. American Revolution 250 Commission; purpose.**

13 *The American Revolution 250 Commission (the Commission) is established as an advisory*
 14 *commission within the executive branch of state government.*

15 *The purpose of the Commission is to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American*
 16 *Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the independence of the United States.*

17 **§ 2.2-2545. Membership; terms; quorum; meetings.**

18 *A. The Commission shall have a total membership of 22 members that shall consist of 17*
 19 *nonlegislative citizen members and five ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows:*

20 *1. One representative from each of the lead commemoration partners: the Jamestown-Yorktown*
 21 *Foundation, the primary state agency and fiscal agent; the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, the*
 22 *primary nonstate agency; and Gunston Hall, the primary representative of Virginia's historic homes and*
 23 *related sites;*

24 *2. One representative from the American Battlefield Trust, the secretariat of the United States*
 25 *Semiquincentennial Commission, and one representative from the Virginia Bar Association;*

26 *5. Six members appointed by the Governor from a list of 10 provided by the Jamestown-Yorktown*
 27 *Foundation; and*

28 *6. Six members appointed by the Governor from a list of 10 provided by the Virginia Museum of*
 29 *History & Culture.*

30 *The Secretary of Education, the Librarian of Virginia, the Director of the Department of Historic*
 31 *Resources, the Executive Director of Virginia Humanities, and the Chief Executive Officer of the*
 32 *Virginia Tourism Authority, or their designees, shall serve as ex officio members with voting privileges.*
 33 *Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.*

34 *B. The Commission shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership.*

35 *C. Nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for the duration of the Commission's activities.*
 36 *Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same*
 37 *manner as the original appointments.*

38 **§ 2.2-2546. Quorum; meetings.**

39 *A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Commission will be held*
 40 *at the call of the chair or whenever a majority of the members so request.*

41 **§ 2.2-2547. Compensation; expenses.**

42 *Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall not receive compensation or reimbursement*
 43 *for travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.*

44 **§ 2.2-2548. Powers and duties of the Commission.**45 *The Commission shall have the power and duty to:*

46 *1. Formulate and implement a program for the inclusive observance of the 250th anniversary of the*
 47 *independence of the United States and the Revolutionary War in Virginia, including (i) civic, cultural,*
 48 *and historical education and scholarship concerning the ideals of the American Revolution and their*
 49 *contemporary relevance; (ii) visitation of museums and historic sites, including battlefields; (iii) creation*
 50 *and publication of historical documents and studies; (iv) cooperation with agencies responsible for the*
 51 *preservation or restoration of historic sites, buildings, art, and artifacts; (v) establishment of exhibitions*
 52 *and interpretive and wayfinding signage; (vi) arrangement of appropriate public ceremonies; (vii) a*
 53 *comprehensive marketing and tourism campaign encompassing calendar year 2025 through calendar*
 54 *year 2026; and (viii) the general dissemination of public information regarding Virginia's involvement in*
 55 *the American Revolution and its legacy today;*

56 *2. Submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim*

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57 activity and work of the Commission no later than the first day of each regular session of the General
58 Assembly;

59 3. Solicit, accept, use, and dispose of funds appropriated by the General Assembly and any gifts,
60 grants, donations, bequests, or other funds received by the Commission for the purpose of aiding or
61 facilitating its work;

62 4. Appoint and establish an advisory council, to be led by the Commission member representing
63 Gunston Hall, composed of nonlegislative citizen members at large who have a knowledge of relevant
64 history or expertise in areas useful to the work of the Commission, including a representative of the
65 Sons of the Revolution in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a representative of the Virginia Daughters of
66 the American Revolution, and a representative of the National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary
67 Route Association. The advisory council shall make recommendations and provide comment as requested
68 by the Commission. The Commission may from time to time appoint, add, or remove members of the
69 advisory council. Members of the advisory council shall serve without compensation or reimbursement;

70 5. Appoint and establish an executive committee composed of members of the Commission, to include
71 the Commission's chair and vice-chair and one representative designated by each of the following: the
72 Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, and Gunston Hall; and

73 6. Perform such other duties, functions, and activities as may be necessary to facilitate and
74 implement the objectives of the Commission.

75 **§ 2.2-2549. Cooperation of agencies of state and local government.**

76 The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation will be the primary state agency and fiscal agent for the
77 commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. All agencies of the Commonwealth
78 and local governments are authorized, consistent with their missions, to provide assistance and advice to
79 the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, or directly to the Commission, in fulfilling all things necessary
80 and proper to plan for and implement the commemoration. The various agencies and institutions of the
81 Commonwealth, upon request of the Commission and approval of the respective agency head, shall
82 designate a liaison to coordinate assistance and services to the Commission from their agencies and
83 institutions.

84 **§ 2.2-2550. Sunset.**

85 *This article shall expire on July 1, 2027.*

86 **2. That during the first year of its existence the American Revolution 250 Commission (the**
87 **Commission) created pursuant to this act shall be limited to two meetings, which shall be**
88 **convened by the Secretary of Education, for the purpose of developing a work plan for the**
89 **Commission. Such work plan shall include information related to staffing and proposed internal**
90 **organizational structure and funding needs. The Secretary shall submit a report on his findings**
91 **regarding the work plan, including any recommendations, to the Governor and the General**
92 **Assembly by November 30, 2020.**

93 **3. That the membership of the American Revolution 250 Commission created pursuant to this act**
94 **shall be increased by the addition of legislative members in such number and of such composition**
95 **as determined by a bill passed by the 2021 Regular Session of the General Assembly that becomes**
96 **law.**

Governor Northam Announces Administration Appointments

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam announced additional appointments to his Administration today.

Secretariat of the Commonwealth Board Appointments

American Revolution 250 Commission

- **Chief Stephen Adkins** of Charles City, Chief, Chickahominy Indian Tribe
- **Edward H. Baine** of Chesterfield, Senior Vice President–Power Delivery, Dominion Energy
- **Leslie Greene Bowman** of Charlottesville, President, Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello
- **Gretchen Bulova** of Fairfax County, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria, City of Alexandria
- **Spencer R. Crew** of Reston, Historian, Acting Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution
- **H. Benson Dendy III** of Richmond, Chairman Emeritus, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
- **Cliff Fleet** of Williamsburg, President and CEO, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
- **Sue H. Gerdelman** of Williamsburg, Trustee, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and Board of Visitors, William & Mary
- **Kym A. Hall** of Williamsburg, Superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park and Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail
- **Chief Anne Richardson** of Indian Neck, Chief, Rappahannock Tribe
- **Jacquelyn E. Stone** of Richmond, Partner, McGuireWoods LLP
- **Karin Wulf** of Williamsburg, Executive Director and Professor, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, William & Mary

HOME OF *American Rights*

October 19, 2020

To the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors:

Greetings from Gunston Hall and I am very pleased and honored to express our enthusiastic support of the Board matter offered by Supervisor Storck specific to the Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States of America.

Earlier this year, the Virginia General Assembly approved and the Governor signed legislation establishing the American Revolution 250 Commission. This Commission will lead, plan, and implement activities and experiences commemorating the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States. These efforts will reach every corner of the Commonwealth and also be aligned with similar programs in other States and that which is being enacted by a Federal Commission established for the same purpose.

Importantly, while Virginia and Virginians were central to the revolutionary movement in 1776, Fairfax County and citizens of Fairfax County led the way and were foundational to declaring and securing our independence. For example, George Washington and George Mason co-authored the 1774 Fairfax Resolves and in doing so they were the first to call for independence. Additionally, after election to the Fifth Virginia Convention meeting in Williamsburg in the spring of 1776, George Mason wrote Virginia's first Constitution and the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Stating in Article 1 that "all men are by nature equally free and independent", Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights inspired and informed our Declaration of Independence and our Bill of Rights.

Equally important, after independence was successfully achieved, the County and its citizens led, inspired, and took action in support of the fulfillment of the promises first expressed by Mason in 1776. This continuing journey and arc of freedom and justice is ultimately what is most important about the commemoration in 2026.

As such, Fairfax County should and can lead the way in supporting the 2026 commemoration! The proposed Board matter creates a strategic and proactive path for doing so. This Board matter also positions Fairfax County as the first local governmental entity in the Commonwealth to make such a commitment to this commemoration and all at Gunston Hall are honored to support and participate in this important work.

Finally, as George Mason and his contemporaries would have said in 1776.....HUZZAH!

Sincerely,



Scott Muir Stroh III
Executive Director



October 19, 2020

Supervisor Dan Storck
Mount Vernon District Supervisor
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
2511 Parkers Lane
Mount Vernon, VA 22306

Dear Supervisor Storck:

Re: Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War and The Independence of the United States of America.

It is an absolute honor and privilege to write this letter of support on behalf of Visit Fairfax and indeed the entire Tourism and Travel Industry of Fairfax to establish a workgroup to provide a comprehensive and commemorative program to observe and celebrate this historical and significant anniversary of our great Country.

There are few places in our Country where this milestone has such significance and indeed Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia are among the top of that list. The history of our great Country is woven by and with so many significant people and events that helped to shape this Country, of which so many called Virginia and Fairfax County home.

Supervisor Storck, this opportunity to celebrate and commemorate the journey our Country has taken and continues to forge in the fulfilment of the Declaration of Independence and what began close to 250 years ago mandates significant attention in order to mark this milestone in our history and Visit Fairfax stands ready to be a part of this.

Supervisor Storck, we look forward to working with the many organizations and people over the next several years to put in place a program which will indeed signify the pride we have in our great County, our Commonwealth and indeed these United States of America.

Respectfully,

Barry H Biggar
President/CEO