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## **VIRGINIA HOUSE DESIGNATES APRIL 25 AS “YOUTH FITNESS DAY”**

*Resolution sponsored by Delegates Toscano and O’Bannon aims to encourage active lifestyles to reduce childhood obesity*

RICHMOND, VA—On February 11, 2010, the Virginia House of Delegates passed H.J.R. 198, a resolution designating April 25 as “Youth Fitness Day” in Virginia, a measure aimed at encouraging healthy, active living and reducing childhood obesity.

The resolution’s patrons, Delegate David J. Toscano (D-Charlottesville) and Delegate John M O’Bannon, III (R-Henrico), seek to raise awareness about the growing problem of childhood obesity and its associated health problems as well as promote healthy lifestyles through fitness. The resolution was endorsed by the Virginia Academy of Family Physicians, and came about as the result of a suggestion from an elementary school class at Charlottesville Day School.

Nearly one in every three children in the United States is obese. Obese children are four times more likely to miss school than normal weight children and are at a higher risk of diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer. Only 8 percent of elementary school students have daily physical education classes.

“Childhood obesity is a huge issue in the Commonwealth, and many people and organizations have emphasized the need to teach our kids about healthy eating and exercise,” said Delegate Toscano. “I hope that schools and families across Virginia will take April 25 as a chance to raise awareness of the need for more physical activity in everyone’s day-to-day life and as an excuse to get out and play.”

The idea for the resolution began in an elementary school class at Charlottesville Day School. Ms. Susan Talbert’s Fourth and Fifth grade classes, who came to Richmond to witness passage of the resolution, were learning about the legislative process when they came to a consensus that they would like the General Assembly to create a Youth Fitness Day.

The students approached Del. Toscano with their idea, writing letters about the need for more opportunities to be active so that kids would pay better attention in class, learn new skills and sportsmanship, and would be healthier.

Ms. Talbert remarked, “We are grateful to Delegate Toscano for being so receptive to our idea. It is a wonderful way for our kids to understand not only how government works, but how they

as citizens can have their voices heard and make a positive difference in their community and beyond.”

“This was a great project for the kids, and I applaud the initiative of their teacher, Susan Talbert, in giving them a chance to see the legislative process in action while encouraging their peers to get active and stay fit,” said Toscano.

The measure now moves to the Senate.

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