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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 82

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 12, 2022

*Designating April, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Arab American Heritage Month in Virginia.*Patron—RasoulCommittee Referral Pending

WHEREAS, Virginia is deeply enriched by the diversity of its residents, and the Commonwealth is proud to be home to one of the largest Arab American populations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Arab Americans who reside in Virginia are hardworking members of their communities with strong family values, diligent work ethics, and diversity in faith and creed, who have enriched and strengthened the Commonwealth as a whole; and

WHEREAS, for centuries, Arab American men and women have played an important role in shaping, advancing, and enriching the Commonwealth by making immense contributions to all areas of life, including education, government, business, cuisine, the arts and humanities, sciences and technology, medicine, law, and the military; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans have made significant contributions through their leadership and hard work in helping to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic as first responders, health care professionals, and scientists contributing to the development of COVID-19 vaccines; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to increase awareness and education about key issues and priorities of the diverse and growing Arab American community, which is seeking greater engagement and representation; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to combat anti-Arab hate speech and hate crimes, stereotypes, prejudice, and civil rights abuses in the Commonwealth and throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, Arab American Heritage Month is an opportunity to celebrate the great cultural pride and vibrancy of Virginia's Arab American residents, whose abilities and contributions strengthen and enrich the Commonwealth's education system, economy, governance, culture, and community life; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans in Virginia have played an important role in civil service, notably those who have been elected to the Virginia General Assembly over the years, and continue to make great strides in public service, while advocating for civil rights and supporting the struggle for equity and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans join all Americans in the desire to see a peaceful and diverse society, where every individual is treated equally and feels safe; and

WHEREAS, during the annual Arab American Heritage Month, Virginians are encouraged to commemorate and celebrate the essential contributions, sacrifices, and accomplishments that Arab Americans, with roots in 22 diverse Arab countries, have made and continue to make in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate April, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Arab American Heritage Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

HJR82