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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 9

Offered January 17, 2022

Condemning the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners by the Chinese Communist Party.

Patrons—Avoli and Ware

Committee Referral Pending

WHEREAS, Falun Gong, a spiritual practice involving meditative "qigong" exercises and centered on the values of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance, became immensely popular in China in the late 1990s, with multiple estimates placing the number of practitioners at upwards of 70 million; and

WHEREAS, in July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) sought to eradicate Falun Gong through an intensive, nationwide persecution, and since then, hundreds of thousands of practitioners have been detained extralegally in Chinese slave labor camps, detention centers, and prisons, where physical and mental torture is common; and

WHEREAS, international media and human rights organizations have documented extensive usage of forced labor by inmates, including large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners, in prisons and labor camps throughout China, and the products of those camps are often exported to overseas markets, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, in June 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed House Resolution 343, condemning systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from practitioners of Falun Gong and other prisoners of conscience in China; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Falun Gong was introduced in Virginia, where there are now many volunteer-run practice sites offering free meditation and exercises classes, and where dozens of Falun Gong survivors have come to reside after experiencing imprisonment, torture, forced labor, and medical tests that can be used to determine organ compatibility in China; and

WHEREAS, state-controlled Chinese media inside and outside of China use vilification and slander to dehumanize Falun Gong practitioners to justify these brutal forms of persecution and to instigate discrimination against them even on American soil, leading to the passage of House Resolution 304, which condemned harassment, threats, and discrimination directed against Falun Gong practitioners in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Chinese labor camps and prisons generate huge amounts of revenue for the Chinese government through an extensive system of slave labor in which Falun Gong practitioners, members of religious and ethnic minorities, and other prisoners of conscience are routinely forced, under inhumane working conditions, to manufacture goods for export to Western countries, including the United States, in flagrant violation of international agreements against such practices; and

WHEREAS, despite little media coverage of the CCP's persecution of Falun Gong, more than 5,000 Virginia residents have signed petitions to their local governments, and more than 20 Virginia localities have adopted related resolutions condemning the CCP's atrocities against Falun Gong practitioners in China, including the use of forced organ harvesting and slave labor; and

WHEREAS, Falun Gong practitioners have made contributions to communities throughout the Commonwealth, and all Virginians stand in solidarity with Falun Gong practitioners in their pursuit of freedom of belief; and

WHEREAS, Virginia residents must be fully informed of the possibility that merchandise available in local stores are the products of the slave labor system in China; and

WHEREAS, Virginia residents and the medical community in the Commonwealth must also be fully informed about the risks of travel to China for organ transplants to help prevent citizens from unwittingly becoming accomplices to the state-sponsored forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates condemn the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners by the Chinese Communist Party; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the House of Delegates strongly condemns the imprisonment, torture, slave labor, and state-sponsored forced organ harvesting used against Falun Gong practitioners in China and demands an immediate end to the persecution of Falun Gong by the Chinese Communist Party; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor of Virginia, the members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation, and the Virginia Department of Health, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the House of Delegates in this

INTRODUCED

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59 matter.