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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ OFFERS ELECTED OFFICIALS A CHANCE TO SHARE THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRACY AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATORS**

*The 2019 Commemoration's Video Booth will capture legislators' thoughts and opinions on the evolution of American democracy over the past 400 years.*

**Boston, MA** (August 4, 2017) – This Sunday through August 9<sup>th</sup>, the 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION, will be exhibiting at the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) Legislative Summit and sponsoring a session that will share the story of the first representative legislative body held in 1619 in Jamestown, Virginia and provide historical context to the discussions going on at NCSL.

The exhibit includes a video booth to capture an attendee's thoughts and feelings about America's democratic system, the evolution and future of our government and our shared history. The videos captured at the NCSL event will be included in future AMERICAN EVOLUTION events as the 2019 Commemoration builds to the commemoration year with a series of signature events.

The session sponsored by the 2019 Commemoration features an introduction by historian Dr. Warren M. Billings who will lay out the historical context that led to the creation of the House of Burgesses. Session participants will examine legislation that was passed during that first House of Burgesses to discuss and pull out similarities in current legislation and policy work and discuss how it reflects in today's legislative environment

"Every state legislature in our country can trace its roots back to Jamestown," said Kathy Spangler, executive director of the 2019 Commemoration. "In many ways, 1619 is the true beginning of democracy in our country as we know it today. The 2019 Commemoration is proud to promote this history and are eager to hear what the elected officials attending the NCSL Summit have to add in their videos."

In April 1619, the Virginia Company of London, which established the Jamestown settlement abolished martial law that had governed the colony and asked Governor Sir George Yeardley to forge a "General Assembly." This General Assembly was comprised of two representatives from each of the 11 existing plantations and allowed the settlers to voice their grievances about social conditions in the colony and participate in self-government. The Assembly met for the first time over six hot and humid days beginning on July 30, 1619 in Jamestown's church.

The NCSL Legislative Summit runs from August 6-9<sup>th</sup> at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The AMERICAN EVOLUTION exhibit can be found at booth 767.

**About the 2019 Commemoration**

The [2019 Commemoration](#), AMERICAN EVOLUTION™, highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Resources is an AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ Founding Partner and Altria Group is a Virginia Colony Partner. The 2019 Commemoration is a sub-agency of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

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