



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Ralph S. Northam
Governor

August 16, 2018

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is our honor and privilege to invite you to participate in ceremonies at Jamestown on July 30, 2019, marking the 400th anniversary of the oldest continuous legislative assembly in the New World.

The beginning of representative government here four centuries ago was the forerunner of the United States Congress and other American legislative bodies, as well as an event of enormous significance in the worldwide advance of democratic institutions and free nations. To commemorate the occasion, the Virginia General Assembly will convene in special session, and we will welcome national and international leaders of distinction.

Your presence and remarks on this important anniversary would be most appropriate. By lending your voice and insights, you would continue a tradition that has brought numerous prior Presidents and world leaders, including Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, to Jamestown to reflect on the significance of the place and its major milestones.

The “American Evolution” commemoration, hosted by the Commonwealth of Virginia throughout 2019, will call attention to multiple historical events of significance that occurred here during 1619. In addition to the first legislative assembly, that pivotal year saw the first recorded arrival of Africans in English North America, the first recruitment of English women in significant numbers, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, and the first major stirrings of entrepreneurship in the Virginia colony. Each of these varied events—some laudable from the start, others fraught with unspeakable hardship and injustice—opened new chapters in the uniquely American story of overcoming, improving, and forging a “more perfect union.” They set in motion what we have become and are still becoming: a nation defined by democracy, diversity, and opportunity.

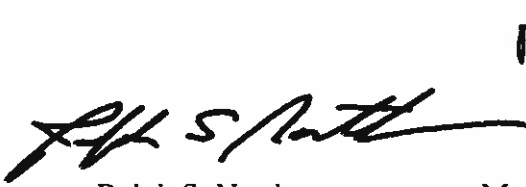
As stewards of some of our country’s earliest history, we Virginians take seriously our responsibility to call attention to major anniversaries and use them to engage a new generation in the still-unfolding American story and the privilege and responsibility of civic participation. Throughout our history, such national patriotic events, often led by the President of the United States, have been important occasions for American reflection and renewal.

Except for the 250th anniversaries of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, the United States Constitution in 2037, and the First Congress in 2039—all of which are years away—there are no such occasions on the horizon more consequential and worthy of national and international observance than those we will commemorate here in Virginia next year.


The anniversary of representative government on July 30, 2019, also presents a singular opportunity to recall the special bonds between the United States and the United Kingdom. The first legislative assembly at Jamestown in 1619 convened pursuant to an English charter, and in the four centuries since that first collaboration America and Great Britain have been partners in defending and advancing representative democracy in our two countries and around the world. We thus also have extended a formal invitation to the British Prime Minister, Theresa May, to participate in the commemorative ceremonies at Jamestown on July 30.

We are most grateful for your consideration of this invitation and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Ralph S. Northam
Governor



M. Kirkland Cox
Speaker, House of Delegates



Thomas K. Norment, Jr.
Senate Majority Leader