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SENATE
of
MARYLAND
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MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES

High Schools - Automated External Defibrillator Program - Requirement

Read the third time and passed by yeas and nays as follows:

Affirmative - 43 Negative - 3 (See Roll Call No. 260)

The Bill was then sent to the House of Delegates.

QUORUM CALL

The presiding officer announced a quorum call, showing 47 Members present.

(See Roll Call No. 261)

RECESS

At 8:44 P.M. on motion of Senator McFadden, seconded, the Senate took a recess until 8:45 P.M. on Monday, February 20, 2006.

AFTER RECESS

Annapolis, Maryland
Monday, February 20, 2006

At 8:49 P.M. the Senate resumed its session.

Prayer by Pastor Steve Merki, St. Charles Church of Nazarene, guest of Senator Middleton.

QUORUM CALL

The presiding officer announced a quorum call, showing 47 Members present.

(See Roll Call No. 261-A)

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY PROGRAM

Musical Selections courtesy of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Chambers Singers, Larry Vote, Provost

THE GREATNESS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON
AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY SENATOR THOMAS MAC MIDDLETON
BEFORE THE MARYLAND SENATE
February 20, 2006

It was in this chamber, on December 23, 1783, that General Washington secured his reputation as the greatest man of his time.

Since June 1775 Washington had led the Continental army — an army of volunteer citizen soldiers who, after eight long years of war, had prevailed over the British army and compelled Britain to recognize the independence of the United States. With the war at an end Washington was the most admired man in the Western world. There were many who wanted him to be King of this new Nation. His appearance here before the Continental Congress, might have signaled the beginning of a dictatorship.

Washington had something else in mind. Having acted for eight years under a commission from congress, he appeared before Congress to return his commission and resign from public life, wanting nothing more than to return home to his Mount Vernon farm without claiming any reward for his service to the republic.

The room was crowded with congressmen, state officials and army officers, all wishing to hear Washington speak. He began first by praising his officers. He congratulated Congress on the outcome of the war. Then after a short pause, he finished his brief remarks: "Having now finished the work assigned me," he said, "I retire from the great theater of action; and bidding an affectionate farewell to this August body under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take leave of all the employments of public life."

The speech lasted less than three minutes. When it was over, Washington took his commission from his pocket and handed it to Thomas Mifflin, the president of congress, and walked out of the chamber. James McHenry, who witnessed this scene, reported that "the spectators all wept, and there was hardly a member of Congress who did not drop tears."

When King George III received the news he was stunned with disbelief. If this is true, the king said to one of his confidants, Washington was truly "the greatest man in the world."

Who are we to argue with George III?

Washington was the greatest man of his age, and he remains the greatest man in our nation's history. Today is a time to celebrate his greatness, and more importantly to consider the sources of his greatness and the practical lessons his remarkable life has for us in the twenty-first century — especially those of us who are called to do the people's business in this great Nation that Washington did so much to create.

II

The first source of Washington's greatness was the classical tradition that provided him and his contemporaries with models of virtuous conduct. When Washington appeared in this chamber he was deliberately reenacting a scene from the life of one of the greatest heroes of Classical antiquity. This was the Roman hero Cincinnatus, a farmer of the fifth century, B.C. Cincinnatus was called from his farm to lead the army of the Roman republic against its enemies. After securing victory Cincinnatus resigned his post and returned to his farm without claiming any reward for his service.

To the generation that fought the American Revolution, Cincinnatus was a model of virtuous republican citizenship and the model citizen soldier. A few months before Washington resigned his commission, the officers of his army had formed a brotherhood they named the Society of the Cincinnati. Taking Cincinnatus for their model, they pledged themselves and their sons in perpetuity "to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature, for which they have fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing." George Washington was the first officer to sign this declaration, known as the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Many of the men who were in this chamber on December 23, 1783, were members of the Society of the Cincinnati, including William Smallwood, Alexander Hamilton, John Eager Howard, Otho Holland Williams and James Monroe. These men had pledged themselves to uphold the idea of the virtuous citizen soldier that inspired Washington. The tears that James McHenry saw were shed in pride — pride not just in Washington but in what each of them had done as well.

The Society of the Cincinnati still exists, and its members remain dedicated to preserving the memory of the American Revolution. The leaders of our revolution were men who were prepared to set aside their private desires for the good of the community. They reached back thousands of years to Classical antiquity to find models of virtuous citizenship. Our task is easier. We have only to reach back a little over two hundred years, to a time when ordinary men led an extraordinary struggle to secure our liberty.

III

Washington did not draw his inspiration only from history. Equally important was Washington's love of the land. He came from a farming family. Washington began life as a farm boy and he never abandoned his attachment to the land. He was a farmer before he became a General. He was a farmer after he retired from the presidency, and he never stopped being a farmer even while leading the Continental army or while leading the nation as President. Thoughts about his farm were never far from his mind.

Through eight long years of war he longed to get home and start farming again, and the years he spent at Mount Vernon after the War were among the happiest of his life. As President he continued to manage his farm by mail, came home to tend his fields as frequently as public business allowed, and told everyone who asked him to serve longer in public life that he wanted nothing more than to go home and tend his "own vine and fig tree."

For those of us who Farm, we know farming is a way of life. It requires constant attention and hard work. A good farmer has to be flexible and has to adapt his operation to changing conditions, especially the weather. He learns the virtue of compromise. And above all, farming teaches one the virtue of patience and the importance of taking the long-term view of things. The story of a successful farm plays out over decades and generations.

Washington worked constantly to make Mount Vernon the Model American Farm. In his career as a farmer Washington constantly thought about the future — not about the present season or about one or two seasons ahead, but about what Mount Vernon should be like long after he was dead and buried.

This was a habit of mind he carried with him into public life. As a political leader George Washington thought about the long-term future of his country. Though confronted by a series of crises and obstacles as daunting as any American political leader has faced, Washington never stopped thinking about the long-term consequences of his policies. He thought constantly about a distant posterity and the phrase “a century hence” recurs over and over again in his letters and speeches. “It should be the highest ambition of every American to extend his views beyond himself,” he said in a speech shortly after becoming president, “and to bear in mind that his conduct will not only affect himself, his country, and his immediate posterity; but that its influence may be co-extensive with the world, and stamp political happiness or misery on ages yet unborn.”

IV

Although he was a visionary who drew inspiration from history and planned for a distant future, Washington's life experience made him an extraordinary practical man. This was a third key to his greatness.

Washington's early years prepared him to deal successfully with immense challenges of his adult life. To young Washington and his contemporaries, his life seemed entirely ordinary. He was the third son of a gentleman planter named Augustine Washington. George's older brothers were sent to England to receive the boarding school education expected of gentlemen of the first rank. George stayed home and was educated at little country schools. He never learned Latin and Greek like his older brothers, and his acquaintance with literature, foreign languages and the more refined parts of a genteel education was severely limited.

But in the end this deficiency in his education proved to be an advantage. Washington spent his formative years learning to become a manager. His father died when he was eleven and George thereafter assisted his mother in the management of the farm. At seventeen he became a county surveyor and began spending much of his time on the Virginia frontier, laying out new farms. In this work he learned to deal with all sorts of people, from rich land speculators to poor backwoodsmen.

By the time he was nineteen George Washington had acquired some of the most important skills he would need to become a successful leader. But he was still a provincial boy.

At age 20 he secured an appointment as a senior officer in the Virginia militia. As a young soldier he learned that command did not simply involve giving orders.

He learned that the best way to do this was to exhibit discipline, energy and courage himself, to lead by example. His courage was contagious, and as such, ordinary men did extraordinary things under his leadership.

As a leader he was able to draw the best out of the men who served him, both as a General and as President. Washington's experience made him a remarkable judge of character and of talent.

As President, Washington had sufficient self-confidence to surround himself with some of the best-educated men and most sophisticated minds of the eighteenth century. His circle of intimate advisors included Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, three of the greatest thinkers of the America's founding generation. Under his leadership they did some of the most important, creative work in American history.

V

A leader who can get the best out of such different men did not feel challenged by views that differed from his own. Washington encouraged open debate and recognized the inherent right of Americans to dissent, but refused to allow himself to be drawn into the narrow partisan debates of his generation. He was able to transcend partisanship, and in a period of partisan rivalry as intense as our own, this ability was a fourth key to his greatness.

He envisioned a unified political community in which Americans would set aside their local interests and partisan sentiments in the interests of the common good. In his First Inaugural Address, he promised that "no local prejudices, or attachments; no separate views, nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great Assemblage of communities and interests."

He was a leader for all Americans, one who rose above the emerging political parties of his time. Nothing in his presidency troubled Washington more deeply than the growth of political partisanship. The spirit of party, he believed, blinded men to the common interest of society and undermined their faith in one another and in their government.

Washington was right about the destructive nature of political partisanship. It obscures the public interest, confusing it with the interests of narrow factions and individuals. It encourages us to focus on unending maneuvers for office and personal advancement. It promotes the absurd view that one party — our own — has a monopoly on virtue and that our partisan opponents are consumed with vice.

Every member of this body, and indeed every person engaged in the political life of our State, should dedicate themselves to the ideal of nonpartisan public service that Washington embraced. America's greatest statesman — a political leader who transcended party. If he were standing here before us tonite he would ask each of us to join our colleagues across party lines to pursue policies that will benefit all the citizens of our state.

VI

George Washington has been acclaimed for over two hundred years as the indispensable man of the American Revolution. But he secured immortality, here in

