



**HIGHLAND COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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BOARD MEMBERS

HENRY A. BUDZINSKI, JR.
HARRY B. SPONAUGLE
PAUL S. TRIBLE

RESOLUTION ON HOUSE BILL 1377

IN RE: OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED HOUSE BILL 1377, WHICH WOULD CREATE A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE INSTITUTE

WHEREAS, House Bill 1377 has been introduced in the 2026 General Assembly Session, which in sum creates a task force to determine whether the Virginia Military Institute should continue to be a state-sponsored institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Military Institute (hereinafter VMI) was founded in 1839 as America's first state-sponsored and supported military college and is the oldest public senior military college in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the concept and design of VMI and its founding principles were developed and adopted by the citizens of Lexington, Virginia in Rockbridge County in 1839, led by an esteemed Lexington, Virginia resident and native son of Virginia, and set the standard of the citizen-soldier throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with its founding principles and unlike any other Senior Military College in the United States, VMI enrolls cadets only, awards bachelor's degrees exclusively, and grants degrees in disciplines including engineering, science, and the liberal arts; and

WHEREAS, VMI has produced approximately 26,000 graduates during its 186 years of existence, many of whom have served the United States of America in the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Marine Corps, including over 285 graduates who have obtained the rank of general or flag officer; and

WHEREAS, VMI is the only Virginia Institution of Higher education with a State Cadet program that graduates citizen-soldiers to work directly for the Commonwealth and benefit all citizens, and has produced leaders in the military, medicine, law, education, engineering, and business; and

WHEREAS, VMI has more than proven itself worthy of the Commonwealth of Virginia's investment of public funds in producing citizen-soldiers who have served the Commonwealth and the Republic of the United States of America for over 186 years; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Highland County, Virginia Board of Supervisors that it states and confirms its strong opposition to House Bill 1377, which proposes to create a task force to investigate and "evaluate" VMI, requires the task force to assess whether other public institutions could "replace the role of VMI in providing taxpayer-funded commissioned officers to the Armed Forces of the United States," directs the task force to consider whether VMI should continue to be a state-sponsored institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and preserves a direct pathway to defund VMI. The Highland County Board of Supervisors urges the General Assembly to reject said legislation, a copy of which is attached to this resolution.

This Resolution was adopted by the Highland County Board of Supervisors on this 3rd day of March 2026.

Harry Sponaugle

Recorded Vote:

Motion:

Henry Budzinski

Yes:

2

No:

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Harry B. Sponaugle, Chairman

Highland County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

JBO

Jerri N. Botkin, County Administrator