

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 305

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to designate April 2023 as "County Government Month" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, county governments were established by the Tennessee Constitution to serve all the residents of the State of Tennessee in partnership with State government; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's ninety-five county and metropolitan consolidated governments provide fundamental services to the more than 7 million people living in this State; and

WHEREAS, some of Tennessee's county governments have existed even longer than the State itself; and

WHEREAS, counties contribute more than \$4.8 billion annually to educate more than 900,000 K-12 students in county school systems; and

WHEREAS, county jails, on average, house nearly 25,000 inmates, with more than 5,000 of those being convicted felons held for the State, reducing the need for additional State prisons; and

WHEREAS, counties manage nearly two-thirds of the public road miles in the State of Tennessee and over half of all bridges; and

WHEREAS, counties support the justice system by providing facilities and staffing for courts, operating jails and workhouses, serving legal process, and performing law enforcement services through the office of the sheriff; and

WHEREAS, counties administer the State's tax relief and tax freeze programs that provide millions of dollars in priority tax relief payments to Tennessee's most vulnerable populations, such as the low-income elderly, disabled homeowners, and disabled veterans, through the county trustees' offices; and

WHEREAS, counties are on the front line in addressing some of our State's most pressing challenges, including disaster recovery and response, the opioid crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recessions, and more; and

WHEREAS, counties provide Tennesseans with many additional services, including, but not limited to, emergency management, solid waste disposal, libraries, senior centers, hospitals, nursing homes, community centers, parks and recreation, planning and zoning, public health, storm water management, and election administration; and

WHEREAS, counties assist the State in the delivery of services such as motor vehicle titling and registration and business licensing and further aid the State by collecting hundreds of millions of dollars in State tax revenue through offices such as court clerk, register of deeds, and county clerk; and

WHEREAS, the nation's 3,069 county governments have a tremendous impact on the lives of Americans, the vitality of local communities, and the national economy by employing more than 3.6 million individuals to deliver essential services to more than 300 million Americans; and

WHEREAS, each year since 1991, the National Association of Counties has encouraged counties to elevate awareness of county responsibilities, programs, and services through the celebration of a National County Government Month; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee County Services Association and its affiliates, the Association of County Mayors, the Tennessee County Commissioners Association, and the Tennessee County Highway Officials Association, together with the County Officials Association of Tennessee, see National County Government Month as a time to celebrate and recognize the critical role played by Tennessee's county and consolidated governments as the government closest to the people; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we recognize and honor the contributions to the lives of all Tennesseans provided through the services of Tennessee's ninety-five counties; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we designate the month of April 2023 as "County Government Month" in the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.