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Statement of Governor Mark R. Warner on the 75th Anniversary of the Buck v. Bell Decision

Mark R. Warner

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF GOVERNOR MARK R. WARNER
--on the 75th anniversary of the Buck v. Bell decision--

"I am sorry that I am unable to be with you on this important occasion.

"In 1924, Virginia, like many states, passed a law permitting involuntary sterilization. In 1927, Carrie Buck was the first person sterilized by the Commonwealth pursuant to that law. Virginia's actions were upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States, and the government ultimately sterilized approximately 8,000 people.

"Last year, the General Assembly passed a resolution expressing profound regret for the Commonwealth's role in the eugenics movement. Today, I offer the Commonwealth's sincere apology for Virginia's participation in eugenics. As I have previously noted, the eugenics movement was a shameful effort in which state government never should have been involved.

"We must remember the Commonwealth's past mistakes in order to prevent them from recurring. This highway marker will serve as a constant reminder of how our government failed its citizens and how we must always strive to do better."

(The above statement is to be read by Del. Mitch Van Yahres at the ceremony dedicating a highway marker commemorating the Buck v. Bell decision, at 11am Thursday, May 2nd at the Region Ten Community Services Board office in Charlottesville. The highway marker's wording was authorized by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources.)