SENATE RESOLUTION

8675

By Senator Liias

WHEREAS, 2017 marks Finland's 100th year of independence and, in honor of its centennial, the Nordic country of 5.5 million people has organized the Finland 100, a year of celebration in which to remember and look forward; and

WHEREAS, Finland's struggle to become independent and maintain that independence is worthy of remembrance and recognition; and

WHEREAS, On December 6, 1917, Finland declared itself an independent republic, repudiating its status as a semiautonomous grand duchy of Russia whose major decisions had been subject to the approval of the tsar; and

WHEREAS, Before coming under Russian rule in 1809, Finland was a part of Sweden for over 600 years, but despite centuries of foreign control, Finland developed and retained its own identity, language, culture, and economy; and

WHEREAS, The Finnish people's desire to be free from an outside empire's authority and to exercise self-determination may be expressed by a phrase famous throughout Finland "Swedes we are not, Russians we will not be, so let us be Finns"; and

WHEREAS, Finland's independence did not come easily or without cost, as the struggle over the control of the government for the new country led to a civil war in 1918 in which more than 37,000 Finns died; and

WHEREAS, Following the civil war, Finland's emphasis on national reconciliation helped strengthen the young republic, and the country experienced rapid social and economic progress; and

WHEREAS, Finland twice defended itself against the Soviet Union during World War II and, though ceding some lands in a peace settlement, was able to maintain its independence; and

WHEREAS, In its 100 years of independence, Finland has transformed itself into a technologically advanced nation, universally recognized for its advanced social welfare policies; outstanding educational system; high standard of living; sophisticated economy; and enviable achievements in music, the arts, and design; all of which have contributed to its repeated ranking among the best places on earth to live;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate celebrate December 6, 2017, as the centennial of Finnish independence and encourage all Washingtonians to join in celebrating the Finland 100.