

Virginia's State Pony

Surrounded by hundreds of visitors, locals, and dozens of ponies, Governor Glenn Youngkin and First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin joined legislators, local leaders, first responders and Cabinet Secretaries as the Governor signed HB 1951 and SB 1478, to designate the Chincoteague Pony as the Official State Pony of the Commonwealth of Virginia at the 98th Annual Chincoteague Fireman's Carnival.

"For 98 years, Chincoteague ponies have been a tradition of this community. Every July, over 47,000 people – from across the Commonwealth, the United States, and yes, the world, come travel to Chincoteague," said Governor Glenn Youngkin. "This little horse uplifts a huge portion of the eastern shore and provides valuable tourism for residents every single year. They represent the Virginia spirit and we can now proudly say that they are the Pony of Virginia."

"Virginia's Chincoteague ponies are emblematic of Virginia's historic equine tradition," said the First Lady of Virginia, Suzanne S. Youngkin. "Today we celebrate yet another important emblem of our Commonwealth's uniqueness."

"I was proud to carry HB 1951 this past session to designate the Chincoteague Pony as the official State Pony. While these ponies may be small, their impact on the Eastern Shore and its residents is monumental," said Delegate Rob Bloxom. "Thank you Governor Youngkin for honoring these animals, which will now serve as a staple of Virginia's legacy."

The Chincoteague pony holds a special place in Virginia history. These hardy and resilient ponies have roamed the marshes and beaches of Chincoteague Island for centuries and have become a permanent fixture of the region's character. Their fascinating history can be traced back to the early colonial era when they were believed to have descended from shipwrecked Spanish horses.

One of the most anticipated events surrounding the Chincoteague ponies is the annual pony swim, a tradition that dates back to the 18th century. Each year, the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company conducts the legendary pony swim, where a group of ponies is herded from Assateague Island to Chincoteague Island, captivating spectators with its timeless beauty and cultural significance.

Through the passage of this legislation, the Commonwealth of Virginia recognizes the historical and cultural significance of the Chincoteague pony, safeguarding their legacy for future generations. This momentous step demonstrates the commitment of Governor Youngkin and the state legislature in preserving Virginia's natural wonders.