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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 196

Offered January 24, 2000

Requesting a joint subcommittee to study the operation of the state and local offices of the Division of Child Support Enforcement.

Patron—Marshall

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the purpose of child support enforcement is to promote the efficient and accurate collection, accounting, and receipt of support for financially dependent children and their custodians; and

WHEREAS, support enforcement must be timely and effective to promote the well-being of the child but must meet certain state and federal guidelines and also respect the rights of the noncustodial parent; and

WHEREAS, child support enforcement offices have been established throughout the Commonwealth, and the state and local offices have wide latitude to contract for services to enforce, collect, account for and disburse payments for child or spousal support; and

WHEREAS, the offices use a number of methods to encourage payment by the responsible party or to withhold certain funds by means of diversion of tax refunds or garnishment of wages; and

WHEREAS, the amount of child support collected by the state has increased from almost \$232 million in 1995 to over \$367 million in 1999; and

WHEREAS, although many of the methods used to enhance collection have been creative and innovative, in a number of instances the information has been incorrect, and persons have been inappropriately inconvenienced by the system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to review the organization, objectives and methodology used by the state and local offices of the Division of Child Support Enforcement to ensure that procedures and information are timely and accurate. In addition, the joint subcommittee shall study the operation of offices around the state to determine how to improve the system, increase accuracy, and, among other things, determine what property should be eligible for attachment.

The joint subcommittee shall be composed of ten members to be comprised in the following manner: four members of the House of Delegates and two citizen members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and three members of the Senate and one citizen member to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections. The citizen members appointed to the joint subcommittee shall represent organized parent or legal advocacy groups with an interest in child support enforcement.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$16,400.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Social Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for processing legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

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