

2000 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 212

Offered January 24, 2000

Requesting the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court of Virginia to recommend an evaluation tool for the judiciary.

Patrons—McDonnell, Cantor, Drake, Griffith, Howell, Suit, Tata, Wagner and Wardrup

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, judicial evaluation is an issue throughout the country in selecting and evaluating the judiciary, especially important since in Virginia judges are considered for reelection no more frequently than once every six years; and

WHEREAS, the part-time nature of the Virginia General Assembly makes it very difficult to give a full review to the judiciary and the programs implemented within the judicial branch without the assistance of a well reasoned set of evaluation standards; and

WHEREAS, with fewer and fewer practicing attorneys serving in the legislature, many members do not bring personal or professional experience with the judiciary to bear on the issue of reelection; and

WHEREAS, several local bar associations in Virginia use surveys of bar membership to assist legislators in evaluating sitting judges and to assist judges in evaluating their own performance, but on a statewide basis, such information is not available except on an ad hoc basis; and

WHEREAS, an evaluation tool needs to be developed which brings together all available information to form a well-rounded picture of judicial performance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court of Virginia be requested to recommend an evaluation tool for the judiciary. Judicial Council shall include in its consideration such tools used in other states. Technical assistance, if needed, shall be provided to the Judicial Council by the Virginia State Bar.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Judicial Council for this study, upon request.

The Judicial Council of the Supreme Court of Virginia 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 the processing of legislative documents.

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