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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 253
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
 (Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
 on February 28, 2000)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Delegate Diamonstein [HJR 224, 253, 254 and 255], and Stump [SJR 256 and 257])

Requesting the Virginia Housing Study Commission, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and certain other agencies, to study certain housing issues.

WHEREAS, in the Commonwealth, the need for additional safe, secure and affordable housing has been identified; and

WHEREAS, carbon monoxide poisoning causes early symptoms, such as headache or dizziness, which may be overlooked or attributed to other minor causes because carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas;

WHEREAS, carbon monoxide poisoning, known as the "silent killer," may result in disorientation, loss of consciousness, brain damage, and death, and can and has resulted in the tragic and unnecessary deaths of Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Housing Study Commission has made unanimous recommendations, pursuant to the 1999 study of protections from carbon monoxide poisoning and life safety matters relating to chimneys, fireplaces, vents, and solid fuel burning appliances and has noted the need to gather additional information and data necessary for additional conclusions to be drawn and possible recommendations to be crafted; and

WHEREAS, the one component of the Commission's unanimous recommendation for ongoing study involves the importance of public awareness of possible carbon monoxide hazards as they relate to chimneys, fireplaces, vents, and solid fuel burning appliances; and

WHEREAS, homeownership is widely regarded as a key to strong and vital communities and to generating personal wealth and ongoing self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth has stated the goal to increase homeownership opportunities, particularly among minorities and new citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, while homeownership rates overall in Virginia have steadily increased in recent years, homeownership rates among minorities have not increased proportionately to overall homeownership rates, according to a recently released federal study; and

WHEREAS, national secondary mortgage market leaders, such as Fannie Mae, have recently reported that minorities and new citizens of the United States are key potential new homeowners; and

WHEREAS, condominium associations are one of the fastest growing segments of the housing market in the Commonwealth that provides homes to a substantial number of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, because of the age of some condominiums in Virginia, more and more condominium associations are facing major structural repairs to the common areas that they are responsible for maintaining; and

WHEREAS, many condominium developers, in creating the condominium and setting its original operational budgets, failed to adequately set aside or to require the set aside of funds for the maintenance of common areas; and

WHEREAS, condominium associations are reluctant to raise annual or special assessments for something that is not perceived by unit owners to be an immediate problem; and

WHEREAS, careful examination of the effects of inadequate reserve funds on condominium associations is essential to protect the safety of Virginia's condominium owners and occupants as well as ensuring the financial well-being of condominium associations; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has a wealth of historic properties, many of which are underutilized, in deteriorating condition and situated in communities in need of revitalization; and

WHEREAS, across the nation, strategies utilizing historic properties have been implemented to provide affordable housing and revitalized communities; and

WHEREAS, such strategies may serve the Commonwealth and its citizens by fostering the development of affordable housing while revitalizing rural, suburban, and urban communities and preserving Virginia's historic properties; and

WHEREAS, more than 41,000 Virginians, many of them elderly, chronically ill or disabled, are currently living in homes that lack indoor plumbing;

WHEREAS, in rural areas, particularly those rural areas that are isolated and difficult to reach, installation of indoor plumbing is a complex, highly regulated activity that presents difficult and challenging delivery and working conditions; and

WHEREAS, in rural areas, there are few central water and sewer systems and, particularly in times

60 of economic expansion, contractors qualified to install well and septic systems and indoor plumbing
61 facilities are in short supply; and

62 WHEREAS, many rural residents are not aware of indoor plumbing installation assistance programs
63 and may face other unique difficulties in complying with lending requirements, such as time-consuming
64 title searches because their properties are owned by numerous heirs and reluctance to ask for assistance;
65 and

66 WHEREAS, Virginia has an estimated 55,000 homeless persons; however, many homeless persons
67 living in rural areas are "invisible" because they obtain temporary shelter from family or friends and are
68 reluctant to ask for assistance; and

69 WHEREAS, changing economic conditions can have a profound effect on rural residents in areas that
70 have less diverse economic bases and few support services, such as mental and physical health care, job
71 training, child care, and transportation; and

72 WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the Commonwealth and its citizens to prevent carbon monoxide
73 poisoning, to increase homeownership opportunities among minorities and new citizens of the United
74 States, to promote affordable housing and community revitalization while using historic preservation
75 strategies, to assist rural Virginians in obtaining indoor plumbing, and to assist those rural Virginians
76 who are now homeless to become self-sufficient and to enjoy the blessings of prosperity experienced by
77 so many of their fellow Virginians; now, therefore, be it

78 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Housing Study
79 Commission, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and
80 certain other agencies, be requested to study certain housing issues.

81 The Virginia Housing Study Commission, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Housing
82 and Community Development and certain other agencies shall conduct the following: (i) the continuing
83 study, as provided in HJR 253 as introduced, of whether changes relating to protection from carbon
84 monoxide poisoning and life safety matters relating to chimneys, fireplaces, vents, and solid fuel burning
85 appliances should be made to the Uniform Statewide Building Code to reflect more closely current
86 provisions of the National Fire Protection Association Code; (ii) the study, with assistance from the
87 Virginia Housing Development Authority, of strategies for increasing home ownership opportunities
88 among minorities and new citizens of the United States, as provided in HJR 254; (iii) the study of
89 provisions of the Condominium Act relating to the adequacy of reserve funds established for the
90 maintenance of common areas, pursuant to HJR 224; (iv) the study of affordable housing and
91 community revitalization opportunities in the Commonwealth, utilizing historic preservation strategies, as
92 provided in HJR 255; (v) the study of the need for and recommendations to foster the improvement of
93 organizational infrastructure, outreach efforts, technical assistance, and construction services for indoor
94 plumbing installation in the homes of rural Virginians living without indoor plumbing, pursuant to HJR
95 256; and (vi) the study, with assistance from the Virginia Interagency Action Council for the Homeless,
96 of the number and needs of homeless persons in rural areas of the Commonwealth and recommendations
97 to foster the self-sufficiency and the participation in the current economic expansion, pursuant to HJR
98 257. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission for this study, upon
99 request.

100 The Virginia Housing Study Commission, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Housing
101 and Community Development and certain other agencies, shall complete its work in time to submit its
102 findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly as
103 provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of
104 legislative documents.