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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 267

Offered January 24, 2000

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the impact of public policies on minority families in the Commonwealth.

Patron—Darner

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, throughout history, the family has been the backbone of society, and for minority families, this is poignantly true; and

WHEREAS, strong family ties among minorities are one of the most significant aspects of their rich ethos; and

WHEREAS, in the minority culture, the tradition has been to love and respect every member unconditionally, and each is valued and respected regardless of his gifts and limitations; and

WHEREAS, it is a recognized fact that the effects of prior discrimination and subjugation continue to be felt by minority families in America; and

WHEREAS, for too long, the task of defining and understanding the reality of minority family life was premised upon the academic perspectives of non-minority scholars who had little or no real experience or relationship with such families; and

WHEREAS, minority families share the same concerns and cherish the same constant values of love, honor, respect, trustworthiness, diligence, hard work, good and bad, and right and wrong, as do non-minority families; and

WHEREAS, often, minorities are considered as a monolithic group; however, they have divergent views on multiple issues, from the economy and global competitiveness to the digital divide and the plethora of social justice issues; and

WHEREAS, the issue of public policy as it affects families has special implications for minorities, due to the direct connection between the laws of the land and the realities of daily life in their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, because social scientists generally provide the information about minority families upon which public policies rest, many public policies designed to assist minority families are based upon faulty premises, inaccurate facts, and poor analyses of the realities of life for such persons; and

WHEREAS, the wealth of families has increased over all, but the economic independence of many minority families and the self-sufficiency of its members are perpetual challenges; and

WHEREAS, some well-intentioned public policies inadvertently result in negative consequences for the structure, stability, and well-being of minority families; and

WHEREAS, the heritage and contributions of minority families have enriched us all; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive study of the impact of public policies on minority families would provide new perspectives regarding the needs, hopes, and realities of minority people for policy-makers, and aid in overhauling policies that undermine the strength, unity, and viability of all families; and

WHEREAS, such a study would also serve as the framework to dismantle stereotypical and biased attitudes toward such persons, to demystify minority American family life, and restore a balanced view to more appropriately serve their real needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the impact of public policies on minority families in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of eleven members, which shall include nine legislative members and two nonlegislative citizen members as follows: five members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker; four members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and one citizen at-large to be appointed by the Speaker; and one citizen at-large to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In conducting the study, the joint subcommittee shall determine the number of minority families, by racial and ethnic groups and by socioeconomic class, in the Commonwealth; identify and analyze State laws, policies, regulations, and procedures for their impact on such families; identify regions of the Commonwealth impacted by high concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities, together with any identified needs of such groups; engage such communities in dialogue regarding their perspectives of the effects of public policies on education, health, human and social services, employment, transportation, etc., and the quality of life in their respective communities; and consider such other matters as the joint subcommittee deems necessary in the furtherance of its work.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$12,250. An estimated \$1,000 is allocated for

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60 materials and resource persons. Such expenses shall be funded from the operational budget of the Clerk
61 of the House of Delegates.

62 The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the
63 Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

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

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