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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 148

Offered January 24, 2000

Requesting the State Department of Health, with the assistance of the Virginia Commission on Youth; the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; the Department of Education; the Virginia Council on Coordinating Prevention; survivor groups; and other interested individuals, to develop a comprehensive youth suicide prevention plan.

Patrons—Houck, Forbes, Howell, Mims and Puller; Delegates: Cantor, Christian, Darner, Hamilton, Ingram, Jackson, Jones, J.C., May, Purkey and Watts

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution 382 enacted by the 1999 General Assembly requested the Department of Health to study the issue of suicide in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, an extensive study effort was undertaken, including a review of the clinical literature, a survey of mental health providers, and the convening of focus groups of survivors of suicide; and

WHEREAS, the study found more Virginians die from suicide than homicide annually; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the third leading cause of death for adolescents; and

WHEREAS, the rate of suicide for Virginian youth ages 10 to 19 years old has increased 32 percent since 1975, and the rate of increase is even greater for non-white youth; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that there are as many as 25 suicide attempts for each suicide death; and

WHEREAS, 90 percent of adolescent suicide victims have at least one diagnosable illness at the time of death; and

WHEREAS, recent Virginia studies have found depression was the leading cause of hospitalization of 10- to 14-year-old children; and

WHEREAS, the prevention of a suicide death of a young person should become a state priority; and

WHEREAS, six states have developed comprehensive suicide prevention plans addressing the promotion of healthy development, early identification, crisis intervention, and support to survivors; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has no such prevention plan, which could help prevent the tragedy of youth suicide; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the State Department of Health, with the assistance of the Virginia Commission on Youth; the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; the Department of Education; the Virginia Council on Coordinating Prevention; survivor groups; and other interested individuals, develop a comprehensive youth suicide prevention plan. The plan shall be targeted to the specific needs of children and adolescents.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the State Department of Health for this study, upon request.

The State Department of Health 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.

INTRODUCED

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