

002646528

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 152

Offered January 24, 2000

*Requesting the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to study the feasibility of creating a student aid initiative similar to the Georgia HOPE scholarship in the Commonwealth.*

---

Patron—Byrne

---

---

Referred to Committee on Rules

---

WHEREAS, as expressed in § 23-30.39, the General Assembly has recognized that "it is essential that this and future generations of youth be given the fullest opportunity to learn and to develop their intellectual and mental capacities"; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's commitment to providing broad access to quality higher education is evidenced not only in its 39 public institutions, including 15 four-year institutions, 23 community colleges, and a junior college, but also in the various state and institutional financial aid initiatives available to students attending public or private colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, the financial aid initiatives available in the Commonwealth include unfunded scholarships awarded by the colleges and universities themselves; nursing, medical, and dental scholarships; state cadetships; the Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) Program, and a range of scholarship, loan, and grant programs; and

WHEREAS, while existing initiatives, such as the College Scholarship Assistance Program, combining state funds with the federal Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) Program and aiding needy undergraduate students at Virginia's public and private institutions; the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program, offering incentives to financially needy students now attending elementary and secondary school "to consider higher education an achievable objective in their future"; and the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program provide invaluable assistance to many undergraduate students, exploration of other aid initiatives may enhance the Commonwealth's ability to ensure broad access to postsecondary educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) scholarship was established in Georgia to assist students with postsecondary education expenses; and

WHEREAS, funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education, the HOPE scholarship may be used at public technical institutes and eligible public or private colleges and universities in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, HOPE scholarships are available to Georgia residents who graduated from high school in 1996 or later with a B average; and

WHEREAS, HOPE grants are awarded for study leading to a certificate or diploma, and HOPE scholarships are awarded to students in degree programs, who must meet different qualifications than students earning a certificate or diploma; and

WHEREAS, according to the Council for School Performance, HOPE scholarship recipients, two years after entering college, are more likely to continue to be enrolled in college, have higher grade point averages, and have earned more credit hours than their classmates; and

WHEREAS, research also indicated that students without HOPE scholarships were more likely to attend Georgia's two-year institutions, while "borderline" HOPE scholarship recipients were more likely to attend state and regional universities; and

WHEREAS, closer examination of the HOPE scholarship program and those factors and components contributing to its success is needed to determine the value of implementing a similar initiative in Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia be requested to study the feasibility of creating a student aid initiative similar to the Georgia HOPE scholarship in the Commonwealth. In conducting its study, the State Council shall review the HOPE scholarship initiative as well as current Virginia student assistance initiatives, present funding levels for Virginia student assistance, fiscal and policy issues relating to the implementation of a program based on the HOPE model; and such other issues as it deems appropriate.

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

The State Council 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

SJ152