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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 604
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Joint Conference Committee
on February 24, 2001)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Landes)

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the feasibility and appropriateness of streamlining the various regulations governing volunteer fire departments and EMS services and the capability of these units to respond to traffic crashes on major highways in sparsely populated areas.

WHEREAS, volunteer rescue squads and fire departments, especially those in sparsely populated areas, are having a great deal of difficulty attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of volunteers who have the skills required to meet the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, the increasing frequency at which these volunteers are called out to respond to emergencies is making their employers ever more reluctant to allow their employees to serve in volunteer rescue squads and volunteer fire departments; and

WHEREAS, many volunteer rescue squads find that the majority of their calls are in response to traffic crashes on major highways, putting a drain on local resources to meet what are, in many respects, regional or even statewide needs; and

WHEREAS, fire departments are subject to the regulations of Department of Fire Programs; and

WHEREAS, emergency medical services personnel are subject to the regulations of the Department of Health; and

WHEREAS, fire departments that also provide emergency medical services are subject to the regulations of two different departments of state government; and

WHEREAS, as a result of dual regulation, these fire/EMS departments spend valuable time completing the paperwork necessary to satisfy the reporting requirements of both agencies; and

WHEREAS, fire/EMS departments perform vital services to ensure the health, safety and welfare of Virginia's citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the feasibility and appropriateness of streamlining the various regulations governing volunteer fire departments and EMS services and the capability of these units to respond to traffic crashes on major highways in sparsely populated areas. The joint subcommittee shall consist of eight members, which shall include six legislative members and two ex officio members as follows: four members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and the directors of the Departments of Health and Fire Programs or their designees to serve ex officio with full voting privileges.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall explore ways to consolidate the reporting requirements of the Department of Fire Programs and the Department of Health into a single report that would satisfy the regulations of both agencies.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$6,000.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The Department of Fire Programs, the Office of Emergency Medical Assistance Services, the Superintendent of State Police and the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Transportation shall provide technical assistance.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its written findings and recommendations by November 30, 2001, to the Governor and the 2002 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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