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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 661

Offered January 10, 2001

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Requesting the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia High School League to cooperate in addressing issues relating to commercial, promotional, and corporate partnerships and sponsorships with schools.

Patrons—Tata, Blevins, Jackson and Keister; Senator: Potts

Referred to Committee on Education

WHEREAS, although commercial activities are not new to the public schools of the Commonwealth, commercial involvement in public education has increased significantly during the past decade; and

WHEREAS, most school officials, parents, and policy makers agree that corporate and business involvement in education has been positive and that the contributions of business and industry have made many school programs and activities possible for which other funding would not have been available; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee to Study Commercial Promotional Activities in High Schools, established pursuant to HJR 239 of 2000, has examined many issues relating to arrangements with athletic apparel companies and other corporations and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee has found that there are many difficult dilemmas facing school boards and school administrators in this time of need for increased funding and rising expenses; and

WHEREAS, incidents in neighboring states involving sponsorships conditioned on access to students for the purpose of developing brand loyalties and increasing product sales have clearly demonstrated that the time has come to establish procedures to prevent problems from developing in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee has received much information on high school and community teams and the growing trend toward professionalism in youth sports; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee strongly opposes the deregulation of amateurism in high school and college athletics; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee has also heard much about the ethical and legal concerns of school officials in relationship to the commercialization of education and the influence of such commercialization on the Commonwealth's students; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee believes that the school boards of Virginia are in the best position to develop coherent and logical ways to prevent the problems that have occurred in other states from occurring in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee has recommended that all school boards have policies on commercial, promotional, and corporate activities that meet their local needs, circumstances, and standards; and

WHEREAS, although business and industry collaboration with schools should be encouraged and fostered, the joint subcommittee's primary concern is to ensure that school boards fulfill their primary purpose of protecting the best interests of the schools and students in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in this regard, the school boards of Virginia may need information and guidance concerning the issues relating to commercial, promotional, and corporate partnerships and sponsorships and the various ways to address these issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia High School League be requested to cooperate in addressing issues relating to commercial, promotional, and corporate partnerships and sponsorships with schools. In so cooperating, the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia High School League are requested to publicize these issues to Virginia's school board members; to provide the school boards of the Commonwealth with factual information on these issues and the problems have occurred in other jurisdictions, including the concerns about inappropriate advertising and products, and the activities across the nation and in Virginia concerning amateur athletics; to provide information on the various kinds of commercial, promotional, and corporate partnerships and sponsorships being implemented; and to recommend the appropriate components of school board policies on these matters. In the implementation of this work, the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia High School League are requested to develop guidelines to assist the school boards of the Commonwealth in addressing these issues and to publish these guidelines for the school boards of the Virginia.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia High School League by the Department of Education, upon request.

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