

017972836

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 683
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
 (Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
 on February 19, 2001)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate McDonnell)

Continuing the Special Task Force Studying Ways Faith-Based Community Service Groups May Provide Assistance to Meet Social Needs.

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution 764 (1999) established a Special Task Force to Study Ways Faith-Based Groups May Provide Assistance to Meet Social Needs; and

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution 291 (2000) continued the Special Task Force; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1996 with the adoption by Congress of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, "charitable choice" language has been added to a wide range of federal social service programs to expand opportunities for faith-based organizations to compete for government funds to provide services; and

WHEREAS, federal funds covering substance abuse treatment, welfare, Welfare to Work, and Community Services Block Grants include "charitable choice" language; and

WHEREAS, additional applications of "charitable choice" are now on the table in Congress, including fatherhood initiatives, juvenile justice, public health, and literacy; and

WHEREAS, the Bush administration has declared a commitment to expanding this concept to new areas of funding, including the creation of a high-level Office of Faith-Based Initiatives; and

WHEREAS, for many ex-offenders the prison system has become a revolving door; and

WHEREAS, the rate of recidivism for ex-offenders is about 40 percent, indicating that two out of five ex-offenders return to prison; and

WHEREAS, the annual cost to house an inmate is more than \$20,000, resulting in an economic drain on public resources, and the high rate of recidivism causes immeasurable drain on families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Operation Turnaround is a volunteer partnership between the state and local faith, business, education, and human resource organizations whose goal is to help ex-offenders become productive, law-abiding members of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Operation Turnaround attempts to help ex-offenders by offering a holistic approach to assistance, including life skills courses, mentoring, career counseling, and assistance in gain employment and housing; and

WHEREAS, to reduce recidivism rates, the Commonwealth needs to examine a variety of avenues to develop programs that will provide ex-offenders with the life skills necessary to avoid crime and become productive members of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Special Task Force has made several recommendations for the expansion of the "charitable choice" provisions in state government and is actively working with the new Liaison Office within the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to expand opportunities for faith-based and charitable organizations to become involved in the provision of human services, and continued oversight is necessary and desirable; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Special Task Force Studying Ways Faith-Based Community Service Groups May Provide Assistance to Meet Social Needs be continued. The Special Task Force shall consist of 14 members, which shall include eight legislative members and six nonlegislative to be appointed as follows: five 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; three members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; five citizen members, three of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House and two of whom shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and the Lieutenant Governor.

The Special Task Force shall complete its objectives pursuant to House Joint Resolution 764 (1999) and House Joint Resolution 291 (2000). The Special Task Force shall also request the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to study the role in which charitable, private, faith-based, and other organizations and programs may provide services to ex-offenders to reduce recidivism, including the possible expansion of Operation Turnaround and the development of other similar programs that utilize the efforts and contributions of charitable, private, faith-based and other organizations and programs to rehabilitate ex-offenders, and report his findings and recommendations to the Special Task Force for its consideration on a date as may be determined by the Task Force.

The Division of Legislative Services shall continue to provide staffing for the study.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Special Task Force, upon request.

SENATE SUBSTITUTE

HJ683S1

60 The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$12,500.

61 The Special Task Force shall complete its work in time to submit its final written findings and
62 recommendations, which shall include the findings and recommendations of the Secretary of Health and
63 Human Resources, by November 30, 2001, to the Governor and the 2002 Session of the General
64 Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the
65 processing of legislative documents.

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