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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 780

Offered January 19, 2001

*Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study, as a component of its examination of elementary and secondary education funding, the implications of granting fiscal autonomy to elected school boards in the Commonwealth.*

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Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the General Assembly in 1992 enacted legislation authorizing local referenda on the direct citizen election of members of school boards; and

WHEREAS, following referenda approving such action, many localities have changed from appointed to elected school boards, with the result that two-thirds of local school board members in the Commonwealth have been elected to their positions by popular vote; and

WHEREAS, nationally, approximately 97 percent of school boards are elected, and more than three-quarters of those school boards have fiscal autonomy; and

WHEREAS, fiscal autonomy has taken various forms in other states, with the local real property tax cited as the most important revenue source for school boards in nearly all states; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's method of funding public education, which in accordance with constitutional requirements places control of educational policy with local school boards while requiring the governing bodies of local governments to appropriate funds for educational purposes, is unique; and

WHEREAS, the existing school funding arrangement often puts elected members of the school board at odds with the budgetary and taxing decisions of another elected body of the same constituency; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's counties and cities collect billions of dollars annually using local taxing instruments and expend much more for education than is currently required by state law; and

WHEREAS, the prospect of fiscal autonomy for elected school boards poses serious issues for the Commonwealth and local governing bodies; and

WHEREAS, school board fiscal autonomy issues are relevant to an examination of elementary and secondary education funding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study, as a component of its examination of elementary and secondary education funding, the implications of granting fiscal autonomy to elected school boards in the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to, funding implications for the Commonwealth and its local governments, equity in educational funding, the composite index, budgets, local tax bases, tax rates, the collection of taxes, and debt for school construction.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall assist the Commission with this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations 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.

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