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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 810
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Joint Conference Committee
on February 24, 2001)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Delegates Jones, S. C.; Jones, J. C. [HJR 666]; Welch [HJR 760]; Morgan [HJR 762]; and Larrabee [HJR 786])

Establishing a Joint Commission on Prescription Drug Assistance.

WHEREAS, rapid scientific advances in biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, immunology, genetics, and information technology are transforming drug discovery and development; and

WHEREAS, effective pharmaceuticals improve the quality of life for Virginia's elderly citizens and help contain the health care costs associated with aging; and

WHEREAS, improved access to pharmaceuticals for needy elderly citizens, while also continuing the flow of new, more effective, life-saving and life-enhancing prescription drugs, are noteworthy goals; and

WHEREAS, many elderly Virginians cannot afford necessary prescription drug coverage, Medicare does not provide coverage for prescription drugs, and Medicaid does not cover the cost of prescription drugs for the neediest elderly Virginians; and

WHEREAS, both major-party presidential candidates in the campaign of 2000 promised to provide prescription drug assistance to needy elderly citizens, as did most candidates for Congress from both parties, making it highly likely that the new United States Congress and new administration will take action on prescription drugs in the upcoming year; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth must be prepared to coordinate its state effort to provide prescription drug assistance with the proposed federal effort to avoid duplication, waste of human and fiscal resources, and the need to change state programs that are established before the implementation of possible new federal programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Commission on Prescription Drug Assistance be established to develop ways and means to provide prescription drug assistance to needy senior citizens and to coordinate state and federal programs providing such assistance. The Commission shall consist of eight members, which shall include six legislative members and two nonlegislative members to be appointed 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; one citizen member at-large to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and one citizen member at-large to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The Commission shall examine (i) the best ways to provide prescription drug assistance to those elderly Virginians who cannot afford to purchase such assistance on their own; (ii) the current scope of coverage, or lack thereof, in major programs including Medicare and Medicaid; (iii) proposed federal legislation and the most efficient manner in which the Commonwealth may coordinate its programs with future federal programs to provide prescription drug assistance; and (iv) such other matters as are relevant to the Commission's objectives.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$9,750.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission for this study, upon request.

The Commission 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.