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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 822

Offered January 19, 2001

Commending the Governor's School for Government and International Studies.

Patrons—Baskerville, Brink, Callahan, Cox, Deeds, Diamonstein, Dickinson, Hall, Hamilton, Hargrove, Moran, Moss, Nixon, O'Bannon, Reid, Rhodes and Ware; Senators: Couric, Hawkins, Lucas, Marsh, Marye, Maxwell and Miller, Y.B.

WHEREAS, the first Virginia Youth Policy Forum convened on October 4, 2000, at the State Capitol, with 100 high school and middle school students from across the Commonwealth debating important issues and proposing solutions; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Policy Forum was a student-led initiative created by students at the Governor's School for Government and International Studies in Richmond, following their attendance at the National Youth Policy Forum in Washington, D.C., on April 6, 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Youth Policy Forum was envisioned by Sid Dante, Kevin Fogg, Catherine Neale, and Joy Rosenthal, students at the Governor's School for Government and International Studies; and

WHEREAS, a core group of approximately 10 Governor's School students contacted schools registered with the Virginia Mock Election Coalition and asked teachers to select students to participate; and

WHEREAS, these Governor's School students created the format and schedule for the day, found dignitaries willing to participate, sent schools suggestions for developing a school-wide Youth Policy Forum and directions for students preparing for such an event, assembled a portfolio of voter education materials for each of the participants, prepared an official program, developed a training program and a set of detailed directions for group moderators, prepared all materials to be used for registration, and prepared the materials for use within each of the small groups during the day; and

WHEREAS, on the day of the event, approximately 25 Governor's School students worked to register students and their teachers, to moderate and facilitate the discussions of the participants, to assist teachers and dignitaries as they visited small group sessions to listen as students discussed issues, prioritized and selected one, and prepared their presentation; and

WHEREAS, four student representatives elected by their groups made presentations to a panel of legislators on the issues of education, the death penalty, juvenile crime prevention, and students rights at the closing session of the forum; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Youth Policy Forum was to excite students about the democratic process by involving them in discussions and problem-solving related to issues of importance to young people and by providing them the opportunity to share their views with elected officials who provide them feedback on their thoughts; and

WHEREAS, after hearing closing remarks from the Secretary of Education, the 100 students unanimously passed a resolution recommending that the Virginia Youth Policy Forum be convened each year in the chamber of the Virginia House of Delegates to provide Virginia's youth an opportunity to voice their opinions on issues of importance to elected and appointed officials; and

WHEREAS, not only did the 100 students from 35 middle schools and high schools gain a new perspective on democracy and political participation, but the program was replicated by individual schools across the Commonwealth, including one in a juvenile correctional facility; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the dedicated students from the Governor's School for Government and International Studies; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly salute the 100 students who took part in the first Virginia Youth Policy Forum on October 4, 2000; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the General Assembly join with the students of the Governor's School for Government and International Studies and the students who attended the first Virginia Youth Policy Forum in support of the Forum's becoming an annual event.

INTRODUCED

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