

2003 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 549

Offered January 8, 2003

Prefiled December 19, 2002

Designating April as Backpack Safety Awareness Month in Virginia.

Patrons—Cox and Welch

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, heavy backpacks have a destructive impact on the posture and spinal health of children; and

WHEREAS, according to a report from Simmons College in April 2001, 55 percent of students carry more than the recommended national guidelines of 10—15 percent of body weight; and

WHEREAS, another survey found that 66 percent of school nurses report seeing students with pain or injury attributed to carrying backpacks; and

WHEREAS, the University of Michigan reported that up to 60 percent of children will experience back pain by the time they reach 18 years of age; and

WHEREAS, National Public Radio reported in 1998 that 65 percent of adolescents' visits to doctors are for backpack-related injuries; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Orthopedics stated that backpack injury is a significant problem for children, with 58 percent of orthopedists having seen patients complaining of back pain related to backpacks; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations has designed a National Backpack Safety program to educate school nurses, teachers, parents, school administrators, healthcare providers, and students about backpack injury and ways to prevent it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the month of April, in 2003 and in each succeeding year, as Backpack Safety Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly urge the schools of the Commonwealth to participate in programs offered to them during Backpack Safety Awareness Month to educate youth about the risk of spinal injury caused by improper backpack use and design.

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