

## 2003 SESSION

### HOUSE SUBSTITUTE

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 549**  
**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**  
(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules  
on January 28, 2003  
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Cox)

*Designating the month of April, in 2003 and in each succeeding year, as Backpack Safety Awareness Month in Virginia.*

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 to 15 percent of body weight, due to backpacks; 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; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the president of the Virginia Chiropractic Association and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that their members may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

HOUSE  
SUBSTITUTE

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