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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 147

Offered January 14, 2004

Prefiled January 14, 2004

*Requesting the Virginia Department of Social Services to study the detection and reporting of caregiver abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults. Report.*

Patrons—Watts, Amundson, Baskerville, Brink, Petersen and Scott, J.M.

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Adult Protective Services investigated more than 11,000 reports of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation in Virginia in 2002; and

WHEREAS, abuse, neglect, or exploitation was substantiated in 62 percent of the reports; and

WHEREAS, more than 70 percent of all the Adult Protective Services reports received in 2002 were cases of neglect, which include self-neglect and neglect by a caregiver; and

WHEREAS, the most likely victims of elder abuse are women, persons age 75 or older, and individuals who are isolated and dependent on others for care;

WHEREAS, caregivers who want to and are capable of providing good care may become stressed with caregiving duties and act out their stress by lashing out at the person in their care; some caregivers are simply not capable of providing the necessary level of care; and other caregivers become abusive as a means to exercise power and control over a weaker person or as a means to exploit the adult's financial resources; and

WHEREAS, Virginia law requires protective services to be offered to abused, neglected, or exploited adults who are 60 years or older, or 18 years of age or older and have a disability; and

WHEREAS, an effective and efficient system for detecting and reporting caretaker abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults is an integral part of Virginia's commitment to protect this valued and vulnerable segment of our society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Department of Social Services be requested to study the detection and reporting of caregiver abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults.

In conducting its study, the Department shall (i) determine whether caretaker abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults can be adequately prosecuted under existing domestic violence or other criminal statutes; (ii) determine whether hospital admission procedures should track occurrences of conditions that could indicate adult abuse or neglect; (iii) develop a list of mandatory reporters and establish reporting procedures comparable to those regarding suspected abuse or neglect of children; and (iv) determine whether family violence fatality review teams should investigate the deaths of adults who were being cared for by nonfamily members when abuse or neglect is a suspected cause of death.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department for this study, upon request.

The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of the Department's progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2005 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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