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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 149

Offered January 14, 2004

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*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study local advisory referenda. Report.*

Patrons—Ware, O. and Fralin; Senator: Edwards

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, advisory referenda have been utilized in various localities throughout the Commonwealth to obtain citizens' views on important matters; and

WHEREAS, the authority to hold such referenda varies greatly from locality to locality; and

WHEREAS, the methods to determine which issues are brought forward for referenda vary among localities and regions of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity for citizen involvement in direct advisory votes on important issues should be equally available throughout the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections and the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections be established to study local advisory referenda. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership.

The joint subcommittee shall consist of eight legislative members. Members shall be appointed as follows: five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates from the House Committee on Privileges and Elections in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; and three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections from the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall examine the various methods available to call for advisory referenda and recommend to the General Assembly a standardized process for initiating and conducting advisory referenda so that all citizens of the Commonwealth have an equal opportunity to participate in these elections.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2004 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$8,000 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2004, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2005 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a document. The executive summary and the 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.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2004 interim.

INTRODUCED

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