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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 167

Offered January 12, 2006

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study Virginia's social services system. Report.

Patrons—Landes, Callahan, Hargrove, Parrish, Putney and Wardrup; Senators: Colgan and Stosch

Unanimous consent to introduce

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, vital social services are delivered to the citizens of the Commonwealth through a state-supervised, locally-administered system that includes the Virginia Department of Social Services, local departments of social services, and community action agencies; and

WHEREAS, the 2004 Session of the Virginia General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution 193 directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to study the operation and performance of the Commonwealth's social services system and self-sufficiency among recipients of benefit programs in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in October 2005, JLARC staff issued a comprehensive assessment of Virginia's social services system entitled Operation and Performance of Virginia's Social Services System; and

WHEREAS, JLARC staff found weaknesses in systemwide management and made 11 recommendations for improvement in the local administrative funding process, human resources, information technology, and State Department of Social Services organization and management; and

WHEREAS, the social services system has underway a strategic planning process, business process reengineering effort, development of an integrated automated system, and other improvement initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the successful prioritization, coordination, and sequencing of these efforts is critical to the improvement of the system and the efficient and effective delivery of social services; and

WHEREAS, in December 2005, JLARC staff issued a comprehensive assessment of changes in self-sufficiency entitled Self-Sufficiency Among Social Services Clients in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, JLARC staff found that a majority of the 14,500 families studied became more financially independent over a two-year period, but that only 29 percent of those families earned income in excess of the federal poverty line and only 13 percent earned income in excess of the self-sufficiency standard after two years; and

WHEREAS, JLARC staff found that benefit programs administered by the social services system do not consistently facilitate low-income families' progression toward self-sufficiency and made 12 recommendations that build upon existing programs to increase personal accountability and enhance the effectiveness of services so that more benefit recipients can attain self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, no mechanism currently exists to facilitate the discussion and analysis among the relevant stakeholders necessary to develop a comprehensive improvement plan, the recommendations presented in the self-sufficiency study identify policy issues for legislative consideration, and many of the issues needing to be addressed are longstanding problems; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study Virginia's social services system. The goals of the joint subcommittee shall be to (i) develop a comprehensive improvement plan for the operation and performance of Virginia's social services system and (ii) examine JLARC recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the system in helping benefit program recipients attain self-sufficiency, which will identify changes needed to improve the system, approaches and timeframes for implementing the changes, and the resources required to implement them. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 12 members that shall consist of six legislative members, four nonlegislative citizen members, and two ex-officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; two nonlegislative citizen members, of whom, one shall be a director of a local department of social services, or his designee, and one shall be a member of a local board of social services to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and two nonlegislative citizen members, of whom, one shall be an employee of the Department of Social Services and one shall be a member of the Board of Social Services, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Secretary of Health and Human Resources or his designee and the Commissioner of Social Services or his designee shall serve ex officio with nonvoting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint

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HJ167

59 subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing
60 by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall
61 only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the
62 purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written
63 authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice
64 chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

65 In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall address: the development and implementation of
66 a local department administrative funds allocation methodology that considers factors including local
67 caseload and local government ability to pay, the development and implementation of local workload
68 measures and target caseload standards in each major program area; supervision and support
69 responsibilities of the State Department of Social Services; the development and implementation of
70 needed assessments and improvements in the system's regional structure, strategic management, and
71 human resources management; recommendations to increase personal accountability and enhance the
72 effectiveness of services to help more social services clients attain self-sufficiency; and the role of
73 workforce development agencies in assisting recipients of benefit programs. The joint subcommittee shall
74 consider and integrate as necessary existing JLARC recommendations and ongoing or planned social
75 services improvement initiatives.

76 The joint subcommittee shall provide opportunities for the participation of the Department of Social
77 Services, local departments of social services representing departments of different sizes and geographic
78 locations, the Board of Social Services, local boards of social services, the Secretary of Commerce and
79 Trade, the Virginia Workforce Council, the Commissioner of the Virginia Employment Commission,
80 local Workforce Investment Boards, local workforce centers, and other interested parties or entities
81 affected by the study. The joint subcommittee may request that the above named groups and
82 organizations meet and determine whether solutions to the issues herein can be achieved through
83 collaborative problem solving and report to the joint subcommittee on or before September 30, 2007.

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

89 The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2006 interim and four meetings for
90 the 2007 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$6,000 for each year without
91 approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require
92 the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a
93 companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall
94 be required.

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

99 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2006, and for
100 the second year by November 30, 2007, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative
101 Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first
102 day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall
103 state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a
104 report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The
105 executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of
106 Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be
107 posted on the General Assembly's website.

108 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
109 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
110 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2006 or 2007
111 interim.