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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 683

Offered January 10, 2007

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Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the actual cost of substance abuse to the Commonwealth to determine the financial savings available to the Commonwealth as a result of providing treatment to offenders diverted from incarceration. Report.

Patron—Landes

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, a 2005 report released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 68 percent of jail inmates reported symptoms in the year before their admission to jail that met substance dependence or abuse criteria and 16 percent of convicted jail inmates said that they committed their offense to get money for drugs; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that recovery treatment services offered to offenders are successful in preventing recidivism; and

WHEREAS, recidivism remains high for offenders exhibiting substance abuse or co-occurring disorders who do not receive treatment services when diverted from jail; and

WHEREAS, the California Drug and Alcohol Treatment Assessment found that a dollar invested in alcohol and drug treatment resulted in over seven dollars in social savings due to reductions in crime and health care costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the actual cost of substance abuse to the Commonwealth, to determine the financial savings available to the Commonwealth as a result of providing treatment to offenders diverted from incarceration.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall examine (i) the policies and procedures governing treatment services, (ii) the effect treatment has on participant behavior, including differences in behavior and experience reported by respondents before and after treatment, (iii) the cost of treatment in different settings, and (iv) the economic value of such treatment to the Commonwealth. The economic value of treatment to the Commonwealth should be measured in terms of (a) costs avoided due to reductions in crime, (b) costs avoided due to reductions in mental and physical illness and disorders, and (c) shifts in income sources. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall also make recommendations concerning appropriate levels of funding for specific types of treatment and recovery services required to meet the needs of Virginians, to provide the greatest opportunity for growth and economic prosperity in the Commonwealth.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2007, and for the second year by November 30, 2008, and the Director 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 next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports 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.

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