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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 98

Offered January 9, 2008

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Requesting the Department of Social Services to study and develop a statewide foster care code of ethics and responsibility agreement. Report.

Patron—Ticer

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, foster care is an integral, indispensable, and vital component of the social services system in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, foster parents are professional, care-giving volunteers for children who are in the custody of local departments of social services; and

WHEREAS, foster parents perform a necessary function in the state's responsibility for the care of dependent children displaced from their homes as a result of allegations or findings of abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, foster care workers in the foster care system are administrative representatives of local departments and private agencies responsible for assuring the success of children and youth placed in foster care homes; and

WHEREAS, foster care workers perform an equally necessary role to that of foster parents in carrying out the state's responsibility for the care of dependent children displaced from their homes as a result of allegations or findings of abuse and neglect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Social Services be requested to study and develop a statewide foster care code of ethics and responsibility agreement.

In conducting its study, the Department of Social Services shall: (i) identify mutual responsibilities of foster parents, foster care workers, and directors of child-placing agencies, including local departments; (ii) develop a foster care code of ethics and responsibilities agreement to be signed by each foster care parent and worker, as well as the local department of social services' or child-placing agency's chief executive officer; and (iii) develop a grievance procedure to be used for violations of the code of ethics.

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

The Department of Social Services shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2008, and for the second year by November 30, 2009, and the Department of Social Services shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document for each year. 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 no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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