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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 641

Offered January 14, 2009

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Establishing a joint subcommittee to study school choice for secondary school students in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Marshall, R.G.

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, every child in the Commonwealth deserves a first-rate education; and
WHEREAS, school choice programs expand educational choices for parents and families who may be dissatisfied with public school options; and

WHEREAS, successful school choice programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland have recently been expanded; and

WHEREAS, school choice programs could give low-income citizens, who tend to be overrepresented at underperforming public schools, a better chance at a decent education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study school choice for secondary school students in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 15 members that shall consist of 12 legislative members, two nonlegislative citizen members, and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: seven 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; five members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; one nonlegislative citizen member who is a representative of an accredited, private secondary school to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and one nonlegislative citizen member who is a parent of a school-aged child to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Secretary of Education or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) examine school choice programs in other states, (ii) compare student success at various public and private secondary schools in the Commonwealth, (iii) look into ways to ensure that any school choice program would be implemented fairly, across racial and socioeconomic lines, and (iv) investigate alternatives to direct payments to families, such as tax credits.

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. Technical assistance shall be provided by Department of Education. 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 2009 interim and four meetings for the 2010 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$ 12,800 for each year 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 for the first year by November 30, 2009, and for the second year by November 30, 2010, 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 next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall

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59 state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a
60 report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The
61 executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of
62 Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be
63 posted on the General Assembly's website.

64 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
65 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
66 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2009 and 2010
67 interims.