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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 723

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 14, 2009

Establishing a joint committee of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health to study the impact of No Child Left Behind on the Standards of Learning and high school graduation rates in Virginia. Report.

Patron—Landes

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was sweeping federal legislation aimed at comprehensive reform in America's public schools, was signed into law in 2002; and

WHEREAS, NCLB has significantly expanded the federal role in public education and requires, among other things, teacher quality, demonstrated academic achievement for all students, and school accountability; and

WHEREAS, as described by the Board of Education, the Standards of Learning for Virginia's public schools establish the Commonwealth's broad expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history and social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education; and

WHEREAS, the State assessment program measures student achievement in four core areas: English, mathematics, science, and history and social science, and the implementation of the Standards of Learning was met with controversy and concern in many quarters of the Commonwealth, particularly the impact on educationally at-risk students, staff development, and remediation, grade retention, dropout, and graduation rates and the re-allocation of previously dedicated resources to ensure school accreditation; and

WHEREAS, there is national and statewide concern about the rising dropout rates, low graduation rates, and the condition of public education generally relative to the nation's ability to compete successfully in the global community; and

WHEREAS, NCLB has engendered considerable commentary from educators and policymakers throughout the nation, especially concerning the meaningful accountability that measures student learning, the need to provide a comprehensive curriculum, testing that accommodates the diverse needs of students, procedures that are fair to English as a Secondary Language (ESL) students, the costs to states to implement the law, and the incongruity of NCLB requirements with existing educational standards and reform efforts; and

WHEREAS, a careful and thorough examination of the impact of NCLB on the Standards of Learning and graduation rates in Virginia is needed to address any unintentional consequences such as widely disparate resources and educational needs and high dropout and low graduation rates; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint committee of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health be established to study the impact of No Child Left Behind on the Standards of Learning and high school graduation rates in Virginia. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall (i) review the requirements of No Child Left Behind and monitor proposed changes in the federal law; (ii) review and compare the requirements of the Standards of Learning for the core subjects vis-a-vis the current requirements of NCLB and evaluate the effect of the federal law on the implementation of the Standards of Learning and dropout and graduation rates across the Commonwealth; (iii) recommend appropriate alternatives to address any problems identified and to facilitate the requirements of the Standards of Learning and compliance with NCLB; and (iv) consider such other related matters as the joint subcommittee deems appropriate to the conduct of the study.

In its deliberations, the joint committee shall provide opportunity for the participation of classroom teachers, school administrators, state and local education entities, and other interested persons in the manner deemed appropriate by the joint subcommittee.

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 the Department of Education and the staffs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate

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59 Committee on Finance. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint
60 committee for this study, upon request.

61 The joint committee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2009 interim and four meetings for the
62 2010 interim. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written
63 authorization of the chairman of the joint committee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint
64 resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

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

68 The joint committee shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2009, and for the
69 second year by November 30, 2010, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative
70 Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first
71 day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall
72 state whether the joint committee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report
73 of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive
74 summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative
75 Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the
76 General Assembly's website.

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