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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 723
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules
on February 3, 2009)
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Landes)

Directing the Division of Legislative Services to collect data and information on the impact of No Child Left Behind on the Standards of Learning and high school graduation rates in Virginia. Report.

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 that 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, ascertaining pertinent data and information on the impact of NCLB on the Standards of Learning and graduation rates in Virginia is needed to assist the General Assembly in addressing 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 the Division of Legislative Services be directed to collect data and information on the impact of No Child Left Behind on the Standards of Learning and high school graduation rates in Virginia.

In collecting the data and information, the Division of Legislative Services shall (i) review the requirements of No Child Left Behind and monitor proposed changes in the federal law; (ii) compare the requirements of the Standards of Learning for the core subjects and the current requirements of NCLB to measure the potential effect of the federal law on the implementation of the Standards of Learning and dropout and graduation rates across the Commonwealth; (iii) identify and describe the problems related to the implementation of the Standards of Learning requirements and compliance with NCLB, particularly the nexus between NCLB and school dropout and graduation rates; (iv) determine whether other issues and national and state public policies influence No Child Left Behind's impact on the Standards of Learning and high school graduation rates in Virginia, and provide a description of such issues and policies, and include any relevant data and information available that illustrate the effects; (v) monitor national, state, and local agencies and organizations and other states relative to initiatives designed to address dropout and graduation rates, and the implementation of NCLB; and (vi) collaborate with the Virginia Commission on Youth, the Department of Education, local school divisions and the education community, as well as other appropriate entities, and include a summary of the initiatives, findings, and recommendations of such agencies and entities in its report.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Division in collecting the data and information, upon request.

The Division of Legislative Services shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and the data and information collected on the impact of No Child Left Behind on the Standards of Learning and high school graduation rates in Virginia no later than the first day of the

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60 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and data and information shall
61 be submitted for publication as a report document 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.