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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1130**

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled January 13, 2010

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-203.1:1, relating to the establishment of a voluntary, public-private health insurance purchasing pool for small businesses.*

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Patrons—Kearney and Kory

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Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-203.1:1 as follows:**

§ 2.2-203.1:1. Secretary to design program for a small business health insurance purchasing pool.

A. The Secretary, in cooperation with the Bureau of Insurance of the State Corporation Commission, shall design a program for a voluntary, public-private health insurance purchasing pool for small businesses. The purchasing pool program shall be designed to allow businesses with 50 or fewer employees to join a purchasing pool through which they may buy health insurance for their employees at a better rate than is otherwise available to them.

B. Elements to be addressed in the Secretary's design of the program shall include: (i) authorizing insurance professionals to negotiate with health insurers and plans on behalf of small businesses that participate in the pool; (ii) contracting by the Commonwealth, or an entity created by it, with private health insurance carriers to provide health insurance for the employees of participating small businesses; (iii) ensuring that adequate efforts are made to enroll a sufficient number of employers to make the pool effective; (iv) creating a timetable for implementation of such a program; and (v) identifying amounts and sources of funding for subsidies to establish competitive premium costs for participating small businesses.

C. In designing the program, the Secretary shall work with interested persons in relevant sectors, including representatives of health insurance companies and health maintenance organizations, insurance agents, health care providers, and small businesses.

D. The Secretary shall finish designing the program by January 1, 2012. Upon completing the design of the program, the Secretary shall submit the program to the Governor and the chairmen of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor and the House Committee on Commerce and Labor.

INTRODUCED

HB1130