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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 117

Offered January 11, 2012

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Recognizing the difficulties caused by unfunded mandates upon Virginia localities.

Patrons—Dudenhefer and Kory

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia has a constitutional requirement to provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools, and has responsibility for the construction and maintenance of local roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS, the counties, cities and towns of Virginia provide a wide range of essential services for all the citizens of the Commonwealth, including fire, police, ambulance and other public protection services, the education of over one million school children, and the operation of free public libraries; and

WHEREAS, the economic recession and the enduring impact on government revenues have resulted in budget shortfalls and challenges at both the state and local levels; and

WHEREAS, the state has further imposed requirements applicable to all localities of Virginia without any appropriation notwithstanding this fiscal crisis; and

WHEREAS, special education costs have grown 36 percent from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2007, and out-of-district tuition expenditures over that same time have grown by 62 percent; and, further, local school district enrollments have grown steadily over that same time by 15 percent; and

WHEREAS, although localities recognize the importance of many of these functions, they cannot continue to absorb these and additional mandates and the corresponding workload imposed by the Commonwealth of Virginia without compensation, reimbursement, or other relief from the Commonwealth, no matter how worthy the causes; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly recognize the difficulties caused by unfunded mandates upon Virginia localities; and, be it RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly acknowledge the hardship placed on localities by unfunded mandates and refrain from imposing any further unfunded mandates and requirements on localities, as said mandates harm local government budgets, adversely impact local services delivery, and increase reliance on existing taxing mechanisms.

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