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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 3, 2012

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study options for establishing an opt-out program for organ, eye, and tissue donation in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—O'Bannon

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, organ, eye, and tissue donation saves lives and reduces suffering for recipients of all ages; and

WHEREAS, frequently transplanted organs and tissues include the kidneys, liver, heart, and lungs as well as skin used to treat burns and serious abrasions, bone used in orthopedic surgery to facilitate healing of fractures or to prevent amputation, tendons used to repair joints, veins used in cardiac bypass surgery, corneas that restore sight to the blind, and other tissues that can save or improve the life of the transplant recipient; and

WHEREAS, at the end of 2010, 58 percent of Virginians age 18 or older were designated organ, eye, and tissue donors; and

WHEREAS, waiting lists for donated organs, eyes, and tissues continue to grow, with more than 110,000 people in the United States currently waiting to receive healthy organs, eyes, or tissues from donors; and

WHEREAS, approximately 6,000 people die each year and approximately three citizens in the Commonwealth die each week while waiting for donation and transplantation of a healthy organ or healthy tissue; and

WHEREAS, a single organ, eye, and tissue donor can save or enhance the lives of more than 50 people through the gift of organ, eye, and tissue donation; and

WHEREAS, implementation of an opt-out program for organ, eye, and tissue donation could increase rates of organ, eye, and tissue donation by as much as 30 percent in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study options for establishing an opt-out program for organ, eye, and tissue donation in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Joint Commission on Health Care shall (i) identify other states and countries that have implemented an opt-out program for organ, eye, and tissue donation and evaluate the effectiveness of those programs in increasing rates of organ, eye, and tissue donation and reducing rates of death among individuals waiting to receive a donated organ or donated tissue, (ii) develop recommendations for implementation of an opt-out program for organ, eye, and tissue donation in the Commonwealth, and (iii) identify and evaluate any potential benefits or negative consequences resulting from implementation of an opt-out program for organ, eye, and tissue donation in the Commonwealth.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Commission on Health Care for this study, upon request.

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2012, and for the second year by November 30, 2013, 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 state whether the Joint Commission on Health Care intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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