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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 23

Offered January 11, 2012

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Requesting the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to develop and implement an Employment First initiative in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Morrissey

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities often have the ability and the desire to seek employment in integrated community settings that provide opportunities to earn wages and benefits and encourage the individual to reach his or her maximum potential and to be treated as equal members of the Commonwealth's workforce; and

WHEREAS, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, like other citizens who are employed, have a positive impact on the economy, purchasing goods and services and contributing to tax and other revenues; and

WHEREAS, despite the positive impacts of employment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a group have one of the highest unemployment rates in the country; and

WHEREAS, since 2002, many states have implemented Employment First initiatives to combat unemployment among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to facilitate greater employment of such individuals by making employment the first day service option for adults receiving services through state agencies and mandating development and implementation of formal job supports, informal family and social supports, and other services to maximize employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, implementation of an Employment First initiative in Virginia will lead to increased employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, resulting in benefits for individuals, families, employers, and communities across the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Secretary of Health and Human Resources be requested to develop and implement an Employment First initiative in the Commonwealth, which shall identify employment in an integrated, community setting earning an amount that is equal to or greater than minimum-wage rates as the first goal for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving services through state agencies.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources by the Departments of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Education, and Rehabilitative Services, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, and other state agencies and public and private entities to identify needs related to educational and job training services, formal job supports, and other services necessary to facilitate employment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including services necessary for preparing such individuals for employment and assisting them in securing and maintaining employment in integrated, community settings.

The Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of his progress in meeting the requests of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2013 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document 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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