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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 4

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 11, 2012

Directing the Clerk of the House of Delegates to provide for the digital recording of standing committee and subcommittee meetings of the House of Delegates and make the recordings available for download on the legislative electronic information system. Report.

Patrons—Surovell, Keam, Kory, Plum, Scott, J.M., Sickles and Watts; Senators: Favola and Petersen

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, democracy works best when citizens are well informed and actively involved in the processes of their government at all levels; and

WHEREAS, connecting citizens to their government promotes transparency, accountability, better access to public services and information, improved communication between public officials and the electorate, and citizens' confidence in those who have been elected to represent them; and

WHEREAS, today, technology is an integral part of the legislative process at the state, local, and federal levels, and nearly every state utilizes technology to promote legislative efficiency and effectiveness and to increase citizen access to the legislative process and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, state legislators cast recorded votes on thousands of measures in subcommittees, committees, and on the floors of each chamber during a legislative session, and millions of taxpayer dollars are spent each year to maintain the legislative electronic information system; however, it can be difficult for ordinary citizens to attend committee and subcommittee meetings, track the deliberations during legislative sessions, and stay abreast of the voting records of their state legislators; and

WHEREAS, citizen access to committee and subcommittee deliberations of the House of Delegates would facilitate an informed citizenry, enable communication between members and the electorate, and help legislators explain the nuances of the legislative process and public policies to their respective constituents and correct inaccurate information in a timely manner when contacted by constituents; and

WHEREAS, significant advances have been made in Internet technology and a growing number of states' legislative websites include live streaming of legislative meetings, webinars, electronic display of the full texts and amendments of bills and resolutions, voting records of legislative members, legislative calendars and journals, information on standing committee structure and oversight, the budget, and links to important governmental and nongovernmental sites; and

WHEREAS, the cost of enabling participatory government in a democracy can be supported in part by voluntary contributions or subscriptions to the services; and

WHEREAS, state legislative websites are evaluated on the following criteria: content, usability, interactivity, transparency, and audience, and these advanced websites promote participatory government, civic engagement, and an informed citizenry for the benefit of the common good; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates be directed to provide for the digital recording of standing committee and subcommittee meetings of the House of Delegates and make the recordings available for download on the legislative electronic information system. The publication of such information on the electronic legislative information system by the Clerk shall commence with the 2013 Regular Session of the General Assembly; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates be authorized to receive and expend contributions, gifts, donations, and subscription fees remitted to the House of Delegates to offset the initial costs of software, services, and equipment necessary to implement the digital recording of committee and subcommittee meetings of the House of Delegates.

The Clerk of the House of Delegates shall report to the House Committee on Rules his progress in meeting the directive of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2013 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

INTRODUCED

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