

13103648D

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 328

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 9, 2013

*Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study funding for elementary and secondary schools in Virginia and determine if adequate state support is being provided to the Commonwealth's public schools and if not, how state support may be increased and used more efficiently. Report.*

Patrons—Saslaw; Delegate: Kory

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth should express a strong commitment to all students who attend public schools in our Commonwealth in order to ensure that they receive an educational opportunity of high quality and a program that is continually maintained; and

WHEREAS, if Virginia is to continue offering a promising future, students must have a meaningful opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the Standards of Learning objectives, to attend a fully accredited school, to graduate with at least a standard diploma, and to be ready for college and careers in this knowledge-based global economy; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Virginia states: "The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained"; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Virginia also states: "The General Assembly shall determine the manner in which funds are to be provided for the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the prescribed standards of quality, and shall provide for the apportionment of the cost of such program between the Commonwealth and the local units of government comprising such school divisions."; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has left unfunded or underfunded the Standards of Quality revisions proposed by the Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, our schools are meeting the challenges of revised graduation requirements, more rigorous Standards of Learning tests, and increased accreditation requirements; and

WHEREAS, many revisions to the Standards of Quality funding formula have been made by the General Assembly since the 2001 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission study; and

WHEREAS, between 2009 and 2013 state per-pupil support for Virginia's public schools has fallen from \$5,274 to \$4,811; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is the eighth wealthiest state in the nation, but ranks thirty-eighth in state per-pupil funding; and

WHEREAS, "Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card," a September 2010 study from the Education Law Center, names Virginia among the six states with the worst track record on funding education; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia News Letter in its June 2010 article "The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: From the Beginnings to Today's Difficulties" stated: "The state budget reductions for public schools have affected negatively the quality of public schools throughout the Commonwealth and especially in the lower fiscal capacity school divisions"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study funding for elementary and secondary schools in Virginia and determine if adequate state support is being provided to the Commonwealth's public schools and if not, how state support may be increased and used more efficiently.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the Department of Education. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2013, and for the second year by November 30, 2014, 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 Legislative Audit and Review Commission 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

INTRODUCED

SJ328

**59** the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's  
**60** website.