

14100728D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 91

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 7, 2014

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study Virginia's ethics laws governing public officials. Report.

Patron—Kory

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, our system of representative government works best when its citizens maintain the highest trust in their public officers and employees at the state and local levels of government and in the executive and legislative branches; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the Commonwealth are entitled to the assurance that the judgment of public officers and employees will not be compromised or affected by inappropriate conflicts; and

WHEREAS, a decade has passed since the most recent study of any significance examined some portions of Virginia's ethics laws as documented in 2003 House Document 31; and

WHEREAS, recent events have prompted debate on the adequacy of Virginia's current ethics laws, including the General Assembly Conflicts of Interests Act and the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act and laws related to lobbying and campaign finance; and

WHEREAS, a variety of issues call for examination, including the relationships among family, friends, lobbyists, and campaign contributors, and the treatment of gifts and campaign contributions in the state and local government arenas, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study Virginia's ethics laws governing public officials. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 14 members that shall consist of nine legislative members, three nonlegislative citizen members, and two ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: three members of the House Committee on Rules and three members of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; one member of the Senate Committee on Rules and two members of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and three nonlegislative citizen members, two of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and one of whom shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Governor or his designee and the Attorney General or his designee shall serve ex officio with nonvoting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall evaluate the adequacy of Virginia's current ethics laws governing the conduct of public officials at the local and state levels of government and make recommendations for improvements in the laws and the procedures used to enforce them.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2014 interim and four meetings for the 2015 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$20,520 for each year without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2014, and for the second year by November 30, 2015, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative

INTRODUCED

HJR1

59 Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first
60 day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall
61 state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a
62 report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The
63 executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of
64 Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be
65 posted on the General Assembly's website.

66 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
67 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
68 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2014 interim.