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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 52

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 6, 2014

Recognizing the inestimable value of early childhood education to children and to the Commonwealth.

Patron—Marsden

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, quality early childhood education programs benefit all children, particularly those from economically disadvantaged homes; provide a sound basis for learning; and build knowledge, personal competence, confidence, and a sense of social responsibility; and

WHEREAS, ensuring access to quality preschool programs for three-year-olds and four-year-olds has proven to be one of the soundest educational investments the public can make, providing demonstrated, significant, long-term reductions in the costs of special education, grade retention, welfare, and crime; and

WHEREAS, during their K through 12 years and beyond, children who attend quality preschool programs perform better on standardized achievement tests in reading and math; exhibit more positive behaviors in the classroom; and are more likely to graduate from high school, continue their education, and become prosperous adults; and

WHEREAS, quality preschool programs should be funded adequately in order to assure adherence to established standards of quality and to recruit and retain professional staff; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth in 2014 expects to allocate \$68.6 million for the Virginia Preschool Initiative to expand childhood education opportunities for children not served by the federal Head Start program; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Preschool Initiative and Head Start serve approximately 33,000 children in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, this figure represents a small percentage of the children in Virginia who could benefit from preschool education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commonwealth recognize the inestimable value of early childhood education to children and to the Commonwealth and set a goal of extending the availability of early childhood education so that the Virginia Preschool Initiative and Head Start together reach 50,000 children in the Commonwealth by 2019; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor in order that he may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

INTRODUCED

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