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**SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 34**

Offered February 11, 2014

*Directing the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services to study staffing levels and employment conditions at the Department of Corrections. Report.*

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Patrons—Puckett, Ebbin and Lucas

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Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Virginia Department of Corrections to enhance public safety by providing effective programs, reentry services, and supervision of sentenced offenders in a humane, cost-efficient manner, consistent with sound correctional principles and constitutional standards; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Corrections aspires to be recognized as a model correctional agency and a proven innovative leader in the field; and

WHEREAS, Virginia will be a safer place to live and work if the Department provides appropriate custody, supervision, programs, and re-entry practices for offenders through its exemplary services; and

WHEREAS, the cornerstone of the Department is its employees, who embrace a common purpose and a commitment to the highest professional standards and excellence in public service; and

WHEREAS, the Department should maintain a responsible commitment to its employees and be a satisfying and rewarding place to work and grow professionally; and

WHEREAS, a critical aspect of fulfilling its mission is adequate staffing; and

WHEREAS, inadequate staffing levels can lead to lapses in safety as well as place employees under extreme stress and at risk of other negative effects on their health; and

WHEREAS, a lack of sufficient staff or adequate compensation for employees leads to rapid turnover, resulting in a lack of seasoned and experienced staff; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, That the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services be directed to study staffing levels and employment conditions at the Department of Corrections.

In conducting its study, the Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services shall study the adequacy of staffing levels, employee health and safety, and turnover rates at the correctional facilities of the Commonwealth.

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

The Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services shall complete its meetings 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 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Committee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted 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.

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