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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 34**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 21, 2014)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Puckett)

Establishing a joint committee of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services and the Senate Committee on Rules to study staffing levels and employment conditions at the Department of Corrections. Report.

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Virginia Department of Corrections to enhance public safety by providing effective programs and reentry services for, 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 and supervision of, and programs reentry 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 of Virginia, That a joint committee of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services and Senate Committee on Rules be established to study staffing levels and employment conditions at the Department of Corrections. The joint committee shall have a total membership of nine members that shall consist of five legislative members and four nonlegislative citizen members. Members shall be appointed as follows: three members of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services; two members of the Senate Committee on Rules to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, of whom two shall be representatives of an association for correctional officers or employees and two shall be former correctional officers or employees. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the Senate of Virginia.

In conducting its study, the joint committee 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 joint 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 joint committee for this study, upon request.

The joint committee shall be limited to four meetings for this study during the 2014 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$14,200 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services and the Clerk of the Senate.

The study committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2014, and the chairman of the joint committee shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of the findings and recommendations of the study committee no later than the first day of the 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the joint 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.