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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 66

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 5, 2016

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the cost of implementation of the Refugee Resettlement Program to the Commonwealth and localities. Report.

Patron—O'Bannon

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Virginia's Refugee Resettlement Program was created to help refugees and their families achieve economic self-sufficiency and social integration into their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Social Services' Office of Newcomer Services is responsible for administering the Refugee Resettlement Program in accordance with state and federal law; and

WHEREAS, federal law governing the Refugee Resettlement Program requires the Commonwealth to operate the Refugee Resettlement Program pursuant to a state plan approved by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, which shall, among other things, (i) provide for the designation of a state agency responsible for developing and administering the plan; (ii) describe how the Commonwealth will coordinate cash and medical assistance for refugees with support services to ensure their successful use, encourage effective refugee resettlement, and promote employment and economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible; (iii) describe how the Commonwealth will ensure that language training and employment services are made available to refugees receiving cash assistance and to other refugees, including how the Commonwealth will actively encourage refugee registration for employment services; (iv) provide for the care and supervision of and legal responsibility for unaccompanied refugee children entering the Commonwealth; and (v) establish procedures to identify refugees who, at the time of resettlement in the Commonwealth, are determined to have medical conditions requiring, or medical histories indicating a need for, treatment or observation and the procedures established to monitor any necessary treatment or observation; and

WHEREAS, while the Refugee Resettlement Program is federally funded, implementation of the program affects both state and local budgets; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the cost of implementation of the Refugee Resettlement Program to the Commonwealth and localities.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) shall identify and evaluate the various fiscal impacts of the Refugee Resettlement Program on the Commonwealth and localities, including costs related to health care, employment, and social and support services for refugees in the Commonwealth and including historical trends and expected future fiscal impacts. As part of its study, JLARC shall specifically address the costs, current and future, of resettlement of Syrian refugees in the Commonwealth.

Technical assistance shall be provided to JLARC by the Department of Social Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to JLARC for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2016, and for the second year by November 30, 2017, 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 JLARC 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 the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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