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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 79**

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 7, 2016

*Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study sentencing of Schedule I and II offenders and alternatives to incarceration. Report.*

Patron—Herring

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, arrests for drug offenses in Virginia have increased even while arrests for other serious crimes are declining; and

WHEREAS, incarcerating drug offenders is an inefficient way of dealing with a population whose problem is often health related or may stem from mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, the public is coming to the realization that simply imprisoning people does not solve the larger issues of drug addiction and the resultant criminal activity of addiction; and

WHEREAS, Virginia needs to consider alternatives to incarceration for simple drug crimes; 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 sentencing of Schedule I and II offenders and alternatives to incarceration.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (the Commission) shall study the efficacy, efficiency, and costs of sentencing and treatment of Schedule I and II offenders and alternatives to incarceration. The Commission shall include a review of evidence-based alternatives to incarceration.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Commission by the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2016, 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 2017 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Commission 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 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.