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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 73

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 12, 2016

Requesting the Department of Social Services to study the feasibility of lessening restrictions of barrier crime statutes applicable to kinship foster care and adoptive placements in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Favola

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, there are many benefits to placing children in need of foster care services or adoption with relatives or other kinship caregivers, such as increased stability, safety, and ability to maintain family connections and cultural traditions; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's current barrier crime statutes regarding kinship foster care and adoptive placements impose restrictions that exceed the restrictions imposed by federal laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of the Commonwealth's barrier crime statutes may unveil opportunities to lessen the restrictions of such statutes in a manner that promotes kinship foster care and adoptive placements while continuing to ensure the safe placement of children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Social Services be requested to study the feasibility of lessening restrictions of barrier crime statutes applicable to kinship foster care and adoptive placements in the Commonwealth. The Department shall present its findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth.

In conducting its study, the Department of Social Services shall (i) review the Commonwealth's current barrier crime statutes that apply to kinship foster care and adoptive placements, (ii) assess the feasibility of lessening and formulate recommendations to lessen the restrictions of such statutes in a manner that would promote kinship foster care and adoptive placements while continuing to ensure the safe placement of children, and (iii) consult with all relevant stakeholders.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Social Services for this study, upon request.

The Department of Social Services shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2016, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and 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 no later than the first day of the 2017 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

S173