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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 96
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 5, 2016)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Dunnavant)

Requesting the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System, and the Department of Education to jointly study strategies for improving college readiness in the Commonwealth. Report.

WHEREAS, today's workplace requires education beyond high school, whether through technical training or college; and

WHEREAS, according to the Southern Regional Education Board, more than half of high school students are not graduating well-prepared to be successful in credit-bearing, entry-level courses in college or technical schools; and

WHEREAS, improving college readiness has the potential to bring a number of benefits to the Commonwealth, including decreasing remediation during college, increasing college credits earned at the high school level, and increasing the use of the guaranteed transfer program offered through the Virginia Community College System; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing need for postsecondary education and training for high-tech, high paying jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, students should have a greater awareness of the cost of higher education and its comparative return on investment in terms of expected income and job availability; and

WHEREAS, while much work has been done to improve college readiness and enhance postsecondary training in the Commonwealth, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive review to assess the impact of those efforts, particularly in regard to student awareness and interagency collaboration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System, and the Department of Education be requested to jointly study strategies for improving college readiness in the Commonwealth.

In conducting their joint study, the agencies shall study and make recommendation on issues that include, but are not limited to, (i) college placement readiness testing in high school; (ii) the development of programs offered in high school to improve college readiness; (iii) increased utilization of dual enrollment to complete college requirements as an alternative to Advanced Placement classes; and (iv) development of a student education program that includes information on the cost of college, appropriate loan-to-debt ratios for college, return on investment for degrees based on pay and job availability, and alternatives to an undergraduate degree that include licensure and certification programs.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System, and the Department of Education for this study, upon request.

The agencies shall complete their joint meetings by November 30, 2016, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of their 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.

SENATE SUBSTITUTE

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