

17102480D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 678

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 10, 2017

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the teaching profession in Virginia. Report.

Patrons—Filler-Corn and Kory; Senator: McClellan

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia requires that " [t]he General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained"; and

WHEREAS, essential to meeting the constitutional responsibilities for the education of Virginia's children, Standard 1 of the Standards of Quality (§ 22.1-253.13:1) states that the quality of education is dependent upon the provision of the appropriate working environment, benefits, and salaries necessary to ensure the availability of a cadre of highly qualified instructional personnel; and

WHEREAS, classroom teachers are the agents by which the diffusion of knowledge throughout society is achieved to inform, equip, and sustain the present generation and the conduits through which civilization and the ethos of a nation are transmitted and perpetuated for the common good of our progeny; and

WHEREAS, teachers encourage intellectual curiosity and inquiry, nurture innate gifts and creativity, acquaint students with new ways of viewing ordinary things, and challenge students to think, imagine, and dream of possibilities beyond their horizons; and

WHEREAS, the transference of our heritage and the ability to stimulate an appreciation of learning and to provide for an educated citizenry is threatened by a severe shortage of classroom teachers; and

WHEREAS, the demand for teachers is most urgently needed in the disciplines of science, mathematics, special education, foreign language, and technology studies and for additional male teachers at the elementary and middle school levels and minority teachers in all disciplines and grade levels; and

WHEREAS, according to the Learning Policy Institute's September 2016 report, "A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.," authored by Leib Sutcher, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Desiree Carver-Thomas, there is "strong evidence that the current national teacher shortage may worsen by the 2017-2018 academic year if current trends continue; by 2020, an estimated 300,000 new teachers will be needed each year and by 2025, the number will increase to 316,000 annually; and students in high-poverty and high-minority areas bear the brunt of teacher shortages"; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Education must report annually to the General Assembly on the critical teaching shortage areas in Virginia and the top 10 critical shortage teaching endorsement areas identified statewide for the 2016-2017 academic year include special education, elementary education PreK-6, middle education grades 6-8, career and technical education, mathematics grades 6-12, (including Algebra 1), school counselors PreK-12, foreign languages PreK-12, English (secondary), health and physical education PreK-12, and history and social science (secondary); and

WHEREAS, careful consideration of teacher preparation, retention, work environment, compensation, and other policy decisions may help alleviate teacher shortages and contribute to a strong teacher workforce that benefits student academic achievement and facilitates a high-quality education; and

WHEREAS, establishing innovative strategies to strengthen current teacher education policies and programs may enhance productivity in training and retaining master teachers, produce a long-term approach to reducing teacher burn out, attrition, student academic underachievement, and increase student competitiveness in the twenty-first century; 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 teaching profession in Virginia.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (the Commission) shall (i) evaluate all areas of teacher preparation programs in Virginia, including entry level positions, licensing and certifications, master teachers, school counselors, and administrators; (ii) identify the reasons teachers leave the profession; (iii) review the Department of Education's recent report to the General Assembly concerning teacher shortage disciplines for the 2016-2017 school year and project the shortage rates by subject areas for the next five years; (iv) determine whether disparities exist in

INTRODUCED

HJ678

59 compensation and benefits, work environment, turnover, and attrition by region of the Commonwealth
60 and rank the regions where disparities and shortages are poorer; (v) compare the compensation, work
61 environment, turnover, and attrition in Virginia with that of other states; (vi) evaluate current and
62 innovative policies and programs that may contribute to improved student academic achievement and a
63 strong teacher workforce implemented in Virginia and other states; and (vii) consider other issues and
64 make recommendations that the Commission determines necessary for a thorough and comprehensive
65 assessment of the teaching profession in the Commonwealth.

66 Technical assistance shall be provided to the Commission by the Department of Education and the
67 State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide
68 assistance to the Commission for this study, upon request.

69 The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30,
70 2017, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive
71 summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2018 Regular Session of
72 the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Commission intends to submit to
73 the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as
74 a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the
75 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents
76 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.