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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 791

Offered January 19, 2017

Recognizing the importance of early childhood brain development and the early childhood profession.

Patron—Greason

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, multidisciplinary research over the past two decades has shown that the architecture of children's brains develops most rapidly in the first five years of life and that high-quality early learning experiences and socio-emotionally rich environments contribute to the generation of neural connections that are essential to a child's learning and development; and

WHEREAS, by supporting the school readiness and overall well-being of young children, early childhood professionals are key partners with families as brain builders; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that the quality of teachers' and caregivers' interactions with and instruction for children from birth to age five has the strongest impact within the classroom on future learning and achievement; and

WHEREAS, in the Commonwealth the current system of training the many types of early childhood professionals that interact with children is fragmented and not always evidence-based, thereby infringing on the ability of such professionals to do their work in ways that maximize the benefits for children; and

WHEREAS, a strong educational start for children is linked to a stable, talented future workforce for the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth's business community has affirmed that early education is the beginning of this workforce pipeline; and

WHEREAS, improving the skills of early childhood professionals can support better success for children, which in turn has been shown to generate significant savings by increasing future earnings and reducing probabilities of grade repetition, high school dropout, teen pregnancy, crime, dependence on public services, and other problems later in life; and

WHEREAS, one early childhood educator can impact the educational trajectory for 200 children over a period of 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the School Readiness Committee, created by the General Assembly pursuant to Chapter 652 of the Acts of Assembly of 2016, has asserted that increasing the skills and competencies of early childhood professionals in the Commonwealth is its first priority in meeting its charge; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth should have the most highly skilled early childhood educator and caregiver workforce in the nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly recognize the importance of early childhood brain development and the early childhood profession; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That all relevant state agencies, workforce development organizations, and public institutions of higher education be encouraged to prioritize decisions and actions that promote a highly competent and structurally sound early childhood profession; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That all relevant institutions and agencies that make decisions and policies be encouraged to be guided by the use of evidence from brain research in the development of a system to prepare skilled early childhood educators and achieve a lasting foundation for a more prosperous and sustainable Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the ongoing efforts of the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System, other public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth, and other entities that utilize public funds to administer, support, or study early childhood education in the Commonwealth to collaborate to maximize all existing funding streams and develop and implement policies and programs to advance the school readiness of children in the Commonwealth from birth to age five and the school success of children by the critical milestone of third grade are recognized and encouraged; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System, and each other public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth in order that such entities may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter during their deliberations.

INTRODUCED

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