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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4004

Offered July 19, 2019

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study public building access and safety best practices. Report.

Patron—Gilbert

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

WHEREAS, most state and local public buildings are required to be accessible to the public in order for state and local governments to provide essential public services to citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to protect both citizens and state and local government employees from threats and emergency situations that may occur within state and local public buildings, including active shooter emergencies; and

WHEREAS, there have been several instances of gun violence erupting in public buildings across the country, including in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, to address these threats to occupants of public buildings, many state and local government officials have implemented security protocols and installed supplemental security infrastructure, such as doors that require key-card access, checkpoints, metal detectors, and guards; and

WHEREAS, it is of paramount importance that law-enforcement officers and emergency personnel be able to gain immediate access to a state or local public building in the event of an emergency; and

WHEREAS, certain security protocols and supplemental infrastructure have hindered the ability of law-enforcement officers and emergency personnel to gain timely access to public buildings during emergencies, preventing law-enforcement officers from neutralizing threats and emergency personnel from reaching and assisting victims; and

WHEREAS, the safety of citizens and state and local employees in public buildings is of the utmost importance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study public building access and safety best practices. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 13 members that shall consist of 12 legislative members and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: seven members of the House of Delegates, of whom two shall be members of the House Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety, two shall be members of the House Committee on General Laws, two shall be members of the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns, and one shall be a member at large, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates and five members of the Senate, of whom two shall be members of the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology, two shall be members of the Senate Committee on Local Government, and one shall be a member at large, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security or his designee shall serve ex officio with nonvoting privileges. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall research, analyze, and consider best practices for public building access and safety, with consideration given to (i) the need for citizens to have reasonable access to public buildings in order to access essential government services; (ii) the need to protect citizens and state and local government employees from threats that may occur within public buildings, including active shooter emergencies; and (iii) the need for law-enforcement officers and emergency personnel to gain timely access to public buildings in the event of an emergency.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of General Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2020 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$22,560 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members

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59 or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the
60 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
61 joint subcommittee.

62 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2020, and the chairman shall
63 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and
64 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2021 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The
65 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
66 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or
67 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the
68 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents
69 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

70 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
71 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
72 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2020 interim.