

2019 SPECIAL SESSION I

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4001

Offered July 9, 2019

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study the underlying causes of mass public shootings or similarly violent acts. Report.

Patrons—DeSteph; Delegate: Convirs-Fowler

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, on May 31, 2019, 12 people were fatally shot and four others were injured in a mass public shooting in Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, while the investigation into the shooting in Virginia Beach is ongoing and conclusions regarding the perpetrator of the incident cannot yet be made, it is imperative that policymakers understand underlying factors that cause a person to attempt a mass public shooting or similarly violent act, any indicators or warning signs of such an attempt, and any appropriate preventative interventions or other possible mitigating actions; and

WHEREAS, although the Commonwealth has conducted studies and implemented various policy recommendations surrounding other tragic public events, the events at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center demonstrate the need for further understanding and action by the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, identifying and understanding the underlying causes of mass public shootings or similarly violent acts is paramount to crafting effective public policy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study the underlying causes of mass public shootings or similarly violent acts.

In conducting its study, the Joint Commission on Health Care shall (i) examine the role of serious mental illness, extreme political or social beliefs, irrational disgruntlement or rage, and any other underlying causes in such an act; (ii) identify other contributing factors such as substance abuse or familial or economic stressors; (iii) identify symptoms, behaviors, or other actions that indicate that an individual is a danger to himself or others; (iv) examine the effectiveness of interventions already in place in the Commonwealth and identify other appropriate interventions or preventative measures, which may include additional involuntary commitments or protective orders, training for relevant personnel to identify at-risk individuals and connect such individuals with services, and mechanisms for reporting individuals to law enforcement; (v) assess relevant policy in other states; and (vi) consider other issues deemed relevant by the Commission.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Commission on Health Care by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Commission on Health Care for this study, upon request.

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2019, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Commission on Health Care intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor 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 and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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