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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 409

Offered January 11, 1995

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study juvenile status offenders.

Patrons—Melvin, Crittenden, Cunningham, Jones, D.C. and Robinson

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Virginia's juvenile code was revised in 1977 to comply with the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which was intended to provide grant funds to the states for delinquency prevention; and

WHEREAS, although approximately \$10 million were supposedly earmarked for Virginia, only about \$900,000 were ever actually appropriated for the entire Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the 1977 revisions created categories of offenders, including status offender, and established alternative sanctions for the courts in dealing with the various categories of offenders; and

WHEREAS, status offender is defined by the Virginia Code as a minor who commits an act that is prohibited by law which would not be an offense if committed by an adult (e.g., curfew violations, truancy, alcohol violations); and

WHEREAS, the revisions to certain sections of the juvenile code took away the authority of the court to detain status offenders; and

WHEREAS, the state should examine the alternatives provided to the courts for status offenders in light of the projected increases in juvenile crime; and

WHEREAS, alternatives which would effectively handle status offenders could arrest the development of that juvenile into an adult criminal; and

WHEREAS, preventive measures would assist children, localities and the Commonwealth in both the long and short terms; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That there is hereby created a joint subcommittee to study juvenile status offenders, the current methods available to the courts for dealing with status offenders, and recommended alternatives. The joint subcommittee shall consist of seven members to be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$6,300.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1996 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for processing legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

INTRODUCED

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