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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 529

Offered January 23, 1995

Requesting the establishment of a joint subcommittee to study the remedial summer school program.

Patrons—Connally, Almand and Darner

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, over the last decade, the numbers of at-risk children have increased significantly in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the standard for identifying at-risk children is clearly understood to be eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, because data indicates that such children are more likely to have academic difficulties and to drop out of school; and

WHEREAS, societal changes, such as the increasing numbers of single parent families and divorced parents and families where both parents work, mean that many children who are not economically deprived may have problems which impact their ability to perform academically; and

WHEREAS, in many of the Commonwealth's school divisions, the numbers of students who speak English as a second language have soared, with many of such students coming into the local schools when in their teens and having never attended school in their native land, illiterate in their own language as well as being unable to speak English; and

WHEREAS, Standard 1 of the Standards of Quality provides that local school boards must have "programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation for students who are educationally at risk including, but not limited to, those whose scores are in the bottom national quartile on the Virginia State Assessment Program Test, or who do not pass the literacy test prescribed by the Board of Education"; and

WHEREAS, this standard also authorizes division superintendents to require students who are educationally at risk to "take special programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation which may include attendance in public summer school sessions"; and

WHEREAS, students required to attend summer school cannot be charged tuition regardless of income level; and

WHEREAS, because summer school programs are optional, not all school divisions conduct such programs; however, in many school divisions, summer school programs are a source of effective "prevention, intervention, and remediation," providing many students with learning opportunities and a safe summer environment; and

WHEREAS, the state funding for remedial summer school programs is always based on stale numbers; and

WHEREAS, distribution of remedial summer school funds is almost always pro rated because the numbers of students actually attending substantially exceeds the numbers used to calculate the funding; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's best course of action would be to provide preventive educational services to at-risk children in order to avoid academic failure, dropping out, and the enhanced potential for criminal involvement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee to study the remedial summer school program be established. The joint subcommittee shall consist of nine members to be appointed as follows: five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker, and four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections. The joint subcommittee shall determine, in its deliberations, (i) those school divisions which conduct remedial summer school programs; (ii) the numbers and characteristics of the students served; (iii) any fees that may be charged to students who are not required to attend summer school and those classes for which such fees are charged; (iv) if possible, the outcomes of attendance at remedial summer school in terms of academic success during the following year or standardized test scores; and (v) the numbers of children who go unserved because of school division financial constraints. The joint subcommittee shall also examine other states' remedial summer school activities.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$5,400.

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.

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