

1995 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 578

Requesting the Committee on District Courts to determine the need for certain transfer policies.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 7, 1995

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1995

WHEREAS, in recent months, public safety and prevention of crime and violence have been dominating concerns of policy makers in the Commonwealth and the nation; and

WHEREAS, an analysis of inmate characteristics demonstrates that the population includes many who are illiterate or sorely lacking in basic skills and who have dropped out of school at early ages; and

WHEREAS, these facts demonstrate dramatically the need for the social systems of the Commonwealth to exercise every possible action to keep children in school and to motivate children to complete at least a high school education; and

WHEREAS, in this regard, the Commonwealth has many laws intended to prevent school dropout, the most important of which is the compulsory school attendance law; and

WHEREAS, in Virginia, although the compulsory school attendance law requires school attendance from the age of five to the age of eighteen, many children drop out of school long before the age of eighteen without any intervention; and

WHEREAS, the juvenile and domestic relations courts are the guardians of troubled children who, in light of their very presence in those courts, are obvious targets for early intervention; and

WHEREAS, many juvenile and domestic relations courts are overworked and without adequate resources to handle any but the most serious cases; and

WHEREAS, juvenile and domestic relations courts have specific subject matter and geographical jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, although specific steps for transferring serious offenders to circuit courts are provided, there are no clear procedures or guidelines for the transfer of cases from one juvenile and domestic relations court to another; and

WHEREAS, reportedly, the logistical problems with transfer policies within and among the juvenile and domestic relations courts, allow children who are habitual truants or in need of supervision or services to move from one jurisdiction to another while under a court order to attend school; and

WHEREAS, because of these problems, children are lost to the system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Committee on District Courts be requested to determine the need and the procedures for a policy for the transfer of cases from one juvenile and domestic relations court to another. The committee is requested to report its recommendations to the Chairmen of the House Committee for Courts of Justice and the Senate Committee for Courts of Justice.

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