

1995 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 588

Expressing the intent of the General Assembly to take a comprehensive approach to welfare reform.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 1995

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1995

WHEREAS, the current welfare system is inadequate and needs major reform; and

WHEREAS, the fact that approximately 70 percent of welfare recipients leave welfare within two years, but often return, demonstrates a strong work ethic yet an inability to find stable employment that pays a decent wage; and

WHEREAS, African-American children are poorer today than in 1969, are more likely to live in extreme poverty than at any time since such statistics have been calculated, and face a greater infant mortality rate compared to white babies than in any year since 1940; and

WHEREAS, the problems of economic dislocation and lack of education and training affect millions of Americans, including those receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits; and

WHEREAS, a broad vision of welfare reform which addresses the education, training and human service needs of all low-income Americans can potentially move families toward self-sufficiency and control over their own lives and destinies; and

WHEREAS, people do not choose to live in poverty and the overwhelming majority of people on AFDC are children who have no control over their circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the current system fails to fully utilize community initiatives, the private sector, educational resources, and inter-agency coordination to deliver full job and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, current welfare reform initiatives focus on altering the character of recipients, rather than focusing on the acquisition of skills; and

WHEREAS, a new comprehensive full employment welfare program may require greater investments initially but will ultimately lead to tremendous savings through reduced welfare costs and higher tax revenues from former recipients who are gainfully employed; and

WHEREAS, the new congressional leadership proposes as one approach placing America's children who are considered at-risk or are on welfare in care away from the primary family; and

WHEREAS, the new congressional leadership should act with compassion for the disadvantaged, acknowledging the existence of economic inequities and social injustice; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly express its intent to support a comprehensive approach to welfare reform that addresses the failures of the education system, the weaknesses of the labor market, and the economic and social problems which exacerbate the disadvantages faced by African-American families.

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