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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 589

Offered January 23, 1995

*Establishing a task force to examine conditions which inhibit African American males from reaching their fullest potential.*

Patrons—Robinson, Crittenden, Cunningham, Jones, D.C., Jones, J.C., Melvin and Spruill; Senators: Lambert, Lucas, Maxwell and Miller, Y.B.

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, homicide is the leading cause of death among African American males between the ages of 15 and 24 years, and every 18 minutes an African American child is arrested for a drug offense; and WHEREAS, the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, eclipsing such nations as South Africa and the former Soviet Union (African Americans comprise only 12-13 percent of the American population, yet African American males constitute over 50 percent of all men in the criminal justice system); and

WHEREAS, total enrollment in higher education increased in the 1980s by 12 percent; however, enrollment of African American males decreased by 7.2 percent; and

WHEREAS, unemployment remains a way of life for many neighborhoods, and 44.1 percent of African American children were living in poverty in 1991; and

WHEREAS, compared to the total population, African American males have a 68 percent higher death rate from heart disease, a 90 percent higher stroke rate, a 71 percent higher cancer rate, and an 86 percent high diabetes rate; and

WHEREAS, 82 percent of Virginia's prison population consists of high school dropouts and 64 percent of that population is African American males; and

WHEREAS, African American males face seemingly insurmountable odds such as illiteracy, drug abuse, single-parent households, child abuse, crime, AIDS, inadequate health care, gang-related violence, unemployment, low self-esteem, and suicide; and

WHEREAS, the welfare and development of African American males demand the immediate and aggressive attention of this country in order to focus on a problem of such epidemic proportions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate of Virginia concurring, That there is hereby established a task force to examine conditions which inhibit African American males from reaching their fullest potential. The commission shall consist of fourteen members: five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; two persons actively practicing psychiatry in Virginia, one to be appointed by the Speaker and one by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and four members to be appointed by the Governor, who shall be a representative of (i) a local school board division, (ii) the Department of Corrections, (iii) the Department of Education and (iv) the Department of Health and Human Resources.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$9,000.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study.

The task force 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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