

1995 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 628

Requesting the Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to study ways to relieve critical teacher shortages.

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

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1995

WHEREAS, the Interim Report of the Governor's Commission on Champion Schools recognized that there are continuing shortages of teachers in certain fields and in certain geographic areas, and there are also shortages of males and minorities in the profession; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Education has documented critical shortages in the licensure areas of special education, science and mathematics, and selected foreign languages, and of minority teachers and teachers for rural areas in all licensure areas; and

WHEREAS, the percentage of minority students in the public schools of Virginia is increasing at a rapid rate while the percentage of minority teachers is decreasing; and

WHEREAS, the number of minority students preparing to teach is far below what would be needed to replace the minorities who are retiring or resigning from teaching; and

WHEREAS, the cost of becoming a teacher has increased significantly in recent years; and

WHEREAS, funding for the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan program has been reduced gradually from \$750,000 in 1987 to zero in the current biennium; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia be requested to study ways to relieve critical teacher shortages. The Board and the Council, in collaboration with the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, are requested to identify ways to relieve teacher shortages in critical areas, including, but not limited to (i) approval of alternative routes to licensure for persons who change careers and for paraprofessionals, (ii) reconstitution of the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program as a more effective and efficient debt reduction program, (iii) dedication of financial aid for higher education that will lead to teacher licensure, and (iv) high school programs to create interest among students in teaching careers, especially in geographic and specialty shortage areas.

The Department of Education shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance, upon request.

The Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall submit their 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 the processing of legislative documents.

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