

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 174

Establishing a commission to study creative solutions for funding for the arts in the Commonwealth.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 23, 1996

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1996

WHEREAS, the visual and performing arts enrich the lives of all Virginians, providing entertainment as well as opportunities for learning, creativity, and self-expression, and serve as catalysts for economic growth, as the presence of arts institutions and cultural activities may enhance the local "quality of life" component necessary to attract and retain a skilled, educated workforce; and

WHEREAS, although private contributions comprise the majority of all arts funding, museums and other cultural institutions are nevertheless dependent on federal, state, and local funding for their continued operation; and

WHEREAS, federal support for the arts, whether provided directly through government agencies and programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum Services, and the Smithsonian Institution, or indirectly through tax deductions and other benefits, has been adversely affected by increasing demands for other services and programs; and

WHEREAS, continuing economic challenges have prompted many states to develop new strategies for arts funding, such as designating specific revenue sources for the arts funding, earmarking lottery money, creating special license plate programs and state income tax check-offs, and adopting special local taxes and percent-for-art legislation; and

WHEREAS, the visual and performing arts in Virginia must compete not only with state institutions for appropriations, but also with the pressing demands that education, social services, transportation, and other programs place on the Commonwealth's budget; and

WHEREAS, the recent national economic downturn has sorely tested arts funding throughout the Commonwealth, and many visual and performing arts organizations have been forced to eliminate positions, alter benefits packages, reduce employee wages, or modify their programming; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Task Force on Promotion of the Arts (1992) described the role of the General Assembly in supporting museums and arts organizations as that of "catalyst, helping to augment and strengthen private and local support of the arts," and, consistent with this characterization, the Commonwealth supplies direct and indirect funding for the arts, recognizing that "the arts are healthier when open to diverse influences and not financially dependent on any single source of support"; and

WHEREAS, although a recent joint subcommittee has examined arts funding, its study was limited to state funding for nonstate museums, and did not directly address the performing arts or support for the Commonwealth's seven state agency museums; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a commission be established to study creative solutions for funding the arts in the Commonwealth. The commission shall consider current funding needs for the visual and performing arts in Virginia; federal, state, local, and private sources for arts funding; the role of the Virginia Commission for the Arts and local arts organizations in supporting and promoting the arts; arts funding initiatives in other states; and such other issues as it deems appropriate.

The commission shall consist of 10 members as follows: 4 members of the House of Delegates and 2 citizen members, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Virginia Commission for the Arts to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and 3 members of the Senate and 1 citizen member to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$4,950.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The Virginia Commission for the Arts and other state agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the commission, upon request.

The commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1997 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of 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.