

1996 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 70

Requesting the Department of Youth and Family Services to develop a risk assessment instrument for juvenile felony offenders.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 1996

Agreed to by the Senate, February 29, 1996

WHEREAS, state and local secure juvenile facilities have suffered from extreme overcrowding during the last four years; and

WHEREAS, the overcrowding of secure facilities may have the unintended impact of restricting a judge's use of secure confinement options for some offenders; and

WHEREAS, a risk assessment instrument is a significant aid to identifying an offender's risk level and subsequent dispositional sentence; and

WHEREAS, when used on a voluntary basis as an information tool for judges, risk assessment instruments have the capacity to ensure valid, reliable and equal outcomes for those to whom they are applied; and

WHEREAS, the use of a risk assessment instrument for juvenile felony cases should be viewed as complementary to the ability to weigh public safety as well as rehabilitative concerns in forming dispositional sentences; and

WHEREAS, both the Juvenile Justice System Reform Task Force established pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 604 (1995) and the Governor's Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform have identified the development of a risk assessment instrument as a necessary enhancement to the juvenile justice system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Youth and Family Services be requested to develop a risk assessment instrument for juvenile felony offenders. The Department shall develop the risk assessment instrument in collaboration with the Virginia Sentencing Commission, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, and circuit and juvenile and domestic relations district court judges for use by juvenile and domestic relations district courts as a guide in determining appropriate dispositions for juvenile felony offenders.

The Department 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.

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