

1996 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 86

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to examine and recommend the best method for providing mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services to persons residing in adult care residences.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 1996
Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1996

WHEREAS, a large number of adult care residences (ACRs), formerly known as licensed homes for adults (LHAs), have been established in the Commonwealth and are designed to serve the needs of citizens who are unable to live without the primary supports of room, board and minimum supervision; and

WHEREAS, ACRs, which are supported by Social Security, Supplemental Security Income or Auxiliary Grants, have proliferated throughout the Commonwealth and currently serve over 25,000 people; and

WHEREAS, ACRs are currently licensed by two departments of state government; a relatively small number receive licensure through the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and are designed to render appropriate services to the mentally disabled, while a larger number of ACRs, licensed by the Department of Social Services, also house citizens with varying degrees of mental disability, but for whom there are few or inadequate services appropriate to their disability; and

WHEREAS, while legislation has established a two-tiered system of services for the ACRs under the Department of Social Services and has authorized appropriate funding which would better provide for the needs of the mentally disabled, regulations, which have been under negotiation for two years, have only recently been adopted; and

WHEREAS, the pressure for deinstitutionalization of state facilities for the mentally disabled, as a means for balancing budgets and funding other state projects, has resulted in an increasingly urgent need for community services for which there has never been adequate funding and has resulted in the placement of more deinstitutionalized adults in ACRs without adequate funding for services or oversight; and

WHEREAS, anecdotal reports suggest that living conditions in some of these homes are poor and, in some instances, warehousing in large, facility-like housing has occurred; and

WHEREAS, parents and advocates for the mentally disabled are increasingly concerned that the lack of funding, services and responsibility for the mentally disabled in ACRs is resulting in (i) potential regression of the health and developmental condition of mentally disabled residents, (ii) potential danger to themselves or others should residents of varying social and cognitive capabilities be housed in close proximity without proper supervision, and (iii) the relative instability of some placements; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to examine and recommend the best method for providing mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services to persons residing in adult care residences, including specific recommendations for funding and determination of services.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 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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