

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 524

Directing the Commission on Youth to continue the study on homeless children in the Commonwealth and to focus its examination specifically on the educational needs of these children.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 30, 1997

Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 1997

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 181 (1996) directed the Commission on Youth and the Virginia Housing Study Commission to study homeless children in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the study identified a variety of negative effects on children, both psychological and physical, as a result of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Education estimates that there are 250,000 school-age children in America who are homeless; and

WHEREAS, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11381 et seq.) requires that homeless children and youths be provided a free and appropriate education; and

WHEREAS, Virginia receives \$331,441 in federal funds to facilitate the school enrollment of these children; and

WHEREAS, this program is only able to serve 15 local school divisions reaching less than 15 percent of all school-age homeless children; and

WHEREAS, schools can provide safe, stable, and predictable places where homeless children can experience success and may achieve mastery in learning; and

WHEREAS, transportation and enrollment requirements may create barriers to a homeless child's enrollment in schools; and

WHEREAS, many school personnel are unable to ascertain if a student is homeless; and

WHEREAS, homeless children often have developmental delays and learning disabilities that require special attention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Commission on Youth be directed to continue the study on homeless children in the Commonwealth and to focus its examination specifically on the educational needs of these children. The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (i) an assessment of the barriers to homeless children's enrollment in schools; (ii) a determination of the availability of day care services for homeless children; and (iii) the development of recommendations regarding training and strategies for school personnel to ensure that homeless children are able to attend and succeed in school.

All 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 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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