

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 578

Directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to study the need for a lay medical investigator system.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 1997

Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 1997

WHEREAS, in some areas of the Commonwealth, difficulties and barriers have been encountered in recruiting physicians to serve as local medical examiners; and

WHEREAS, the generalist physician initiative is an opportunity to educate physicians-in-training in Virginia, and who are likely to practice in Virginia, about community service as a local medical examiner; and

WHEREAS, some states have addressed this problem by adopting a program for lay medical investigators to permit appropriately qualified nonphysicians to perform the initial scene investigation and collect pertinent medical information and medical evidence; and

WHEREAS, lay persons who may qualify for such responsibilities might include registered nurses, emergency medical technicians, and others with high levels of training; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia State Crime Commission be directed to study the need for a lay medical investigator system. The Commission shall study the need for additional medical examiners in the Commonwealth, the issues related to difficulties in recruiting physician medical examiners, the barriers that prevent or discourage physicians from serving as local medical examiners, and the benefits of introducing service as a Virginia medical examiner into the generalist initiative curriculum in Virginia's Schools of Medicine as an important aspect of physician community service. The Commission is further requested to examine the need for and appropriate use of lay medical investigators in our health system and the feasibility of implementing a lay medical investigator system. The Commission should solicit the assistance of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, police, physicians, and local prosecutors to assist them in their work.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission for this study, 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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