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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 583

Offered January 20, 1997

Encouraging certain public and private agencies and organizations to establish and expand outreach programs targeting minority students and their families.

Patrons—Cunningham, Christian, Crittenden, Crouch, Darner, McEachin, Rhodes and Spruill

Referred to Committee on Education

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status and Needs of African-American Males in Virginia, pursuant to House Joint Resolution 167 (1996), was established to identify and examine the factors and barriers which impede the welfare and development of African-American males; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee examined the status and needs of such persons in education, employment, the correctional system, health, and society, giving particular attention during the first phase of its study to education, employment and economics, and the correctional system and violence; and

WHEREAS, information and expert testimony presented to the joint subcommittee indicate that African-American Males are fragile, vulnerable, and endangered, and significantly disadvantaged in the areas of education, employment, and economics; and

WHEREAS, African-American males are disproportionately represented among prison populations and persons otherwise under court supervision; and

WHEREAS, data submitted to the joint subcommittee reveal a bleak statistical profile of African-American males in many instances, such as poor academic achievement, lower high school completion and college admissions and graduation rates, higher unemployment rates, and high incarceration rates; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee considered the antecedents of the problems affecting African-American males, and determined that many of these problems are preventable and amenable to remediation under appropriate conditions; and

WHEREAS, these young men and their families often lack the support of extended family and community assistance to help them address the pressures of multiple social and economic problems that confront them, or to resist the lure and temptation of imprudent and expedient solutions which exacerbate their problems; and

WHEREAS, the various educational, cultural, and enrichment programs and services, as well as support groups, offered by many community and civic organizations, the religious community, public schools, and institutions of higher education have proven to be effective prevention and intervention alternatives; and

WHEREAS, such prevention and intervention alternatives include summer outreach programs, tutorials, mentorships, and seminars designed to expose young African-American males to postsecondary educational and employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, many disadvantaged young people do not have the resources or support of parents, peers, and family to avail themselves of these enriching opportunities, which would provide and enhance their exposure to an array of life choices, and would challenge them to envision great possibilities for themselves; and

WHEREAS, community and civic organizations, the religious community, public schools, and institutions of higher education have a unique opportunity for lifetime investment in, and the ability to reach, persuade, guide, and support many of, our most vulnerable youth, particularly African-American males, and to leave an indelible impression upon their hearts, minds, and character; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That certain public and private agencies and organizations be encouraged to establish and expand outreach programs targeting minority students and their families; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That local school divisions, public and private institutions of higher education, the religious community, and civic and community organizations be encouraged to offer and enhance opportunities for youth, particularly African-American males, to participate in summer outreach programs, tutorials, mentorships, and seminars which emphasize family involvement to provide quality, safe, and productive, adult-supervised educational, cultural, and enrichment experiences; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Chairman and Director of the State Council of Higher Education, the Director of the State Council of Higher Education's Better Information Project, the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, the

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60 Virginia Council of Independent Colleges, the President of the Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs,
61 the President of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, the President of the Coalition of 100 Black Men,
62 the Director of the Robert E. Lee Boy Scouts Council, the Executive Director of the Commonwealth
63 Girl Scouts Council of Virginia, Inc., the General Minister of the Virginia Council of Churches, and the
64 Executive Minister of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, requesting that they further
65 disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituencies in order that they may be apprised
66 of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.