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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 620

Offered January 20, 1997

Requesting the Commission on the Coordination of the Delivery of Services to Persons with Physical and Sensory Disabilities; the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; and the Virginia State Crime Commission to study jointly the prevalence of traumatic head injury among persons in mental and correctional institutions.

Patrons—Scott, Almand, Callahan and Plum

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 439 of every 100,000 Virginia citizens have suffered traumatic brain injury; and

WHEREAS, many of Virginia's citizens who survive traumatic brain injury remain chronically disabled and in need of continuous care; and

WHEREAS, the direct and indirect costs of care, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons with head injuries are nationally estimated to be over \$10.5 billion each year; and

WHEREAS, persons with traumatic brain injury often suffer mild to severe cognitive limitations and temporary or permanent behavioral and physical impairments; and

WHEREAS, the social and interpersonal skills of many of these persons may be adversely impacted, often manifested in aggressive behavior, alternative lifestyles easily distinguished from their lifestyles before the onset of their disability, impaired reasoning, hyperactivity, substance abuse, and violent behavior; and

WHEREAS, data suggests that due to these changes in such persons, many may be misdiagnosed and therefore inappropriately placed and treated; and

WHEREAS, the misdiagnosis of traumatic brain injury as mental illness and the extent to which juveniles and adults have been incarcerated due to the manifestations of their disability are fraught with fiscal and public policy implications; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Commission on the Coordination of the Delivery of Services to Persons with Physical and Sensory Disabilities; the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; and the Virginia State Crime Commission be requested to study jointly the prevalence of head injury among persons in mental and correctional institutions. The agencies shall work collaboratively to (i) determine the incidence of traumatic brain injury among persons in mental and correctional institutions and the severity of such injuries; (ii) develop a demographic profile of persons with such injuries, including the age when the injury occurred; (iii) for such persons in criminal institutions, correlate the severity of traumatic brain injury to the types of crimes committed and, in the case of persons in mental institutions, the reasons for admission; (iv) ascertain the number of persons diagnosed with traumatic brain injury in each population, how the diagnosis was determined, and the type of treatment, if any, they are receiving; (v) determine the costs of treating and maintaining such persons in these facilities; and (vi) consider such other related matters as the agencies may deem appropriate.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commissions and the Department for this study, upon request.

The Commissions and the Department shall complete their work in time to submit their 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 processing legislative documents.

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