GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 647

Directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to study alternative means of discouraging shoplifting.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 1997
Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 1997

WHEREAS, retail merchants throughout the Commonwealth continue to suffer extensive annual losses at the hands of increasingly sophisticated shoplifters, and retail prices continue to escalate as a result; and

WHEREAS, in other jurisdictions, juvenile shoplifting offenses may be handled (i) through a "teen court" system which allows for "trial," imposition of a sanction, and post-"conviction" supervision by peers of the offender as a means of sensitizing youth to the extent of the harm caused by shoplifting, or (ii) by the imposition of monetary sanctions against parents of teen shoplifters; and

WHEREAS, in efforts directed towards more sophisticated offenders, other jurisdictions also may employ enhanced sanctions against the purchasers of stolen goods ("fences"); and

WHEREAS, a coordinated approach of alternative means of addressing the problems associated with and resulting from shoplifting is required; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia State Crime Commission be directed to study alternative means of discouraging shoplifting. The Commission shall consider alternative means of detection and apprehension of suspected shoplifters and enhanced sanctions. The Crime Commission should seek data on effective programs in other states and input from the business community.

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.