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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 283**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the Joint Conference Committee
on February 22, 1997)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Edwards)

Expressing the objective of the Commonwealth to return to a policy of funding an average of 70 percent of the costs of higher education to reduce tuition and fees for in-state students at the public colleges and universities, subject to the availability of sufficient general fund revenue.

WHEREAS, Virginia's public colleges and universities must be of high quality and must be affordable for the citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal exigencies of the early 1990s required that scarce general fund resources be directed toward entitlements, public safety and elementary and secondary education with reduced support for higher education; and

WHEREAS, the public institutions of higher education maintained their quality during this period of economic difficulty by restructuring their programs and by increasing tuition and fees; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's traditional policy of the past has been to provide sufficient general fund revenue to finance 70 percent of the cost of education for in-state students at the public colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, by action of the General Assembly tuition and educational and general fees were frozen at the fiscal year 1996 level for fiscal years 1997 and 1998 while more than \$200 million in general funds were added to the operating budgets of the public institutions; and

WHEREAS, current state support still approximates only 50 percent of the cost of education of the public colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Virginia, Article 1, Section 15, notes that "free government rests, as does all progress, upon the broadest possible diffusion of knowledge"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the objective of the Commonwealth shall be to return to a policy of funding an average of 70 percent of the costs of higher education to reduce tuition and fees for in-state students at the public colleges and universities, subject to the availability of sufficient general fund revenue; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That, consistent with its goal to maintain and improve the quality of public higher education, the Commonwealth strive to reduce the costs of tuition and fees to make postsecondary education more affordable for the citizens of the Commonwealth.