

## 1997 SESSION

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### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 353

Offered January 20, 1997

*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the physical access to public buildings by disabled persons.*

Patrons—Maxwell, Lambert, Miller, Y.B. and Williams; Delegates: Barlow, Behm, Cooper, Crittenden, Cunningham, Hamilton and Spruill

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, over 43 million Americans are affected by physical and sensory disabilities, including blindness, deafness paralysis, muscular and nerve impairment, respiratory affliction, and speech and brain disorders; and

WHEREAS, the Congress, through passage of the American Disabilities Act, P. L. 101-336, has established a national policy that disabled citizens shall be afforded the assistance that they require to participate fully in every area of society; and

WHEREAS, the American Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to persons with disabilities, prohibits discrimination against such persons, and requires that barriers which affect their access to employment and to public accommodations and services be removed; and

WHEREAS, among the barriers to be removed are those which impede the physical access of such persons to existing and new facilities; and

WHEREAS, employers, businesses, and public agencies are required to comply with the American Disabilities Act to ensure persons with disabilities full access and participation to public accommodations and services; and

WHEREAS, barriers to employment, transportation, public accommodations, public services, and telecommunications have imposed staggering economic and social costs on society, and have undermined the efforts to educate, rehabilitate, and employ persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the removal of such barriers, particularly physical barriers which impede access to public buildings, facilities, services, and accommodations, will enable society to benefit from the skills and talents of disabled persons, and enable them to lead fuller, more productive lives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the physical access to public buildings by disabled persons. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of nine legislative members to be appointed as follows: four members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, and five members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

The joint subcommittee shall (i) review the requirements of current federal and state laws relative to the rights of persons with disabilities; (ii) determine the extent to which state and local government buildings and facilities are in compliance with such laws; (iii) determine ways to improve and enhance access to public accommodations and services; (iv) consider such other related issues as may be necessary to address the needs of disabled persons to access public buildings, accommodations, and services; and (v) offer such recommendations as the joint subcommittee may deem necessary and appropriate.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$6,750.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Departments of Housing and Community Development, Rehabilitative Services, and Rights of Virginians with Disabilities. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee 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.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

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