

1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 356

Requesting the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, with the assistance of the Advisory Commission on Welfare Reform, to study methods to ensure the continued success of Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) clients as they work toward self-sufficiency.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 17, 1997

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 13, 1997

WHEREAS, quarterly implementation of the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) began in Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties on July 1, 1995, and in Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell Counties and the Cities of Bedford and Lynchburg on October 1, 1995, and has continued in other regions of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, because of encouraging early results and the requirements of national welfare reform, statewide implementation of the VIEW program has been accelerated and will be complete by October 1, 1997; and

WHEREAS, by the end of the 1996 fiscal year, declines in welfare caseloads had saved \$24 million in state and federal funds and 69 percent of VIEW participants required to be in a work activity had earned \$2.7 million in addition to AFDC benefits; and

WHEREAS, much of the initial success of the VIEW program has been due to the cooperation of local businesses, chambers of commerce, local social services agencies, Private Industry Councils, and church groups that have provided jobs, helped with transportation, and volunteered their time; and

WHEREAS, VIEW participants in the first group of localities to implement the VIEW program will begin to relinquish cash assistance benefits in July of 1997 and one year later these individuals may not be able to rely on previously provided support services such as Medicaid, day care, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth wants to encourage efforts in cooperation with the private sector to help individuals complete successfully the transition to self-sufficiency, to help families maintain and improve their new independent economic status, and to preserve the vitality of communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, with the assistance of the Advisory Commission on Welfare Reform, be requested to study methods to ensure the continued success of Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) clients as they work toward self-sufficiency. In conducting the study, the Secretary shall consider options for helping working families, with particular attention to those families who live in the first regions to implement the VIEW program. Such options shall include, but not be limited to, expanding employment opportunities, increasing the availability and accessibility of quality child day care and transportation assistance, expanding training and education opportunities, and examining health care availability. The Secretary shall also study specific topics referred to it by the 1997 Session of the General Assembly, including Senate Joint Resolution No. 346 (1997) on welfare fraud and Senate Joint Resolution No. 303 (1997) on drug testing of recipients of cash assistance to needy families in Virginia.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources for this study, upon request.

The Secretary shall complete his work in time to submit his initial findings and recommendations by November 15, 1997, to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly, and his subsequent findings and recommendations by November 15, 1998, to the Governor and the 1999 Session of the General Assembly, as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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